

ROUNDABOUT PAPERS
COLLECTION
OF
BRITISH AUTHORS
TAUCHNITZ EDITION.

VOL. 1011.

ROUNDABOUT PAPERS BY W. M. THACKERAY.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOL. I.



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1868

ROUNDAABOUT PAPERS.

BY

W. M. THACKERAY,

AUTHOR OF "VANITY FAIR," "THE NEWCOMES," ETC.

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IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOL. I.

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BERNHARD TAUCHNITZ

1869.

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ROUNABOUT PAPERS.

ON A LAZY IDLE BOY.

I HAD occasion to pass a week in the autumn in the little old town of Coire or Chur, in the Grisons, where lies buried that very ancient British king, saint, and martyr, Lucius,* who founded the Church of St. Peter, on Cornhill. Few people note the church now-a-days, and fewer ever heard of the saint. In the cathedral at Chur, his statue appears surrounded by other sainted persons of his family. With tight red breeches, a Roman habit, a curly brown beard, and a neat little gilt crown and sceptre, he stands,

* Stow quotes the inscription, still extant, "from the table fast chained in St. Peter's Church, Cornhill;" and says, "he was after some chronicle buried at London, and after some chronicle buried at Glowcester"—but, oh! these incorrect chroniclers! when Alban Butler, in the "Lives of the Saints," v. XII., and Murray's "Handbook," and the Sacristan at Chur, all say Lucius was killed there, and I saw his tomb with my own eyes!

a very comely and cheerful image: and, from what I may call his peculiar position with regard to Cornhill, I beheld this figure of St. Lucius with more interest than I should have bestowed upon personages who, hierarchically, are, I dare say, his superiors.

The pretty little city stands, so to speak, at the end of the world—of the world of to-day, the world of rapid motion, and rushing railways, and the commerce and intercourse of men. From the northern gate, the iron road stretches away to Zürich, to Basle, to Paris, to home. From the old southern barriers, before which a little river rushes, and around which stretch the crumbling battlements of the ancient town, the road bears the slow diligence or lagging vetturino by the shallow Rhine, through the awful gorges of the Via Mala, and presently over the Splügen to the shores of Como.

I have seldom seen a place more quaint, pretty, calm, and pastoral, than this remote little Chur. What need have the inhabitants for walls and ramparts, except to build summer-houses, to trail vines, and hang clothes to dry on them? No enemies approach the great mouldering gates: only at morn and even the cows come lowing past them, the village maidens chatter merrily round the fountains, and babble like the ever-voluble stream that flows under the old walls. The schoolboys, with book and

satchel, in smart uniforms, march up to the gymnasium, and return thence at their stated time. There is one coffee-house in the town, and I see one old gentleman goes to it. There are shops with no customers seemingly, and the lazy tradesmen look out of their little windows at the single stranger sauntering by. There is a stall with baskets of queer little black grapes and apples, and a pretty brisk trade with half-a-dozen urchins standing round. But, beyond this, there is scarce any talk or movement in the street. There's nobody at the bookshop. "If you will have the goodness to come again in an hour," says the banker, with his mouthful of dinner at one o'clock, "you can have the money." There is nobody at the hotel, save the good landlady, the kind waiters, the brisk young cook who ministers to you. Nobody is in the Protestant church—(oh! strange sight, the two confessions are here at peace!)—nobody in the Catholic church: until the sacristan, from his snug abode in the cathedral close, espies the traveller eyeing the monsters and pillars before the old shark-toothed arch of his cathedral, and comes out (with a view to remuneration possibly) and opens the gate, and shows you the venerable church, and the queer old relics in the sacristy, and the ancient vestments (a black velvet cope, amongst other robes, as fresh as

yesterday, and presented by that notorious "pervert," Henry of Navarre and France), and the statue of St. Lucius who built St. Peter's Church, on Cornhill.

What a quiet, kind, quaint, pleasant, pretty old town! Has it been asleep these hundreds and hundreds of years, and is the brisk young Prince of the Sidereal Realms in his screaming car drawn by his snorting steel elephant coming to waken it? Time was when there must have been life and bustle and commerce here. Those vast, venerable walls were not made to keep out cows, but men-at-arms, led by fierce captains, who prowled about the gates, and robbed the traders as they passed in and out with their bales, their goods, their pack-horses, and their wains. Is the place so dead that even the clergy of the different denominations can't quarrel? Why, seven or eight, or a dozen, or fifteen hundred years ago (they haven't the register at St. Peter's up to that remote period. I dare say it was burnt in the fire of London)—a dozen hundred years ago, when there was some life in the town, St. Lucius was stoned here on account of theological differences, after founding our church in Cornhill.

There was a sweet pretty river walk we used to take in the evening and mark the mountains round glooming with a deeper purple; the shades creeping up the golden walls; the river brawling, the cattle

calling, the maids and chatterboxes round the fountains babbling and bawling; and several times in the course of our sober walks we overtook a lazy slouching boy, or hobble-dehoy, with a rusty coat, and trousers not too long, and big feet trailing lazily one after the other, and large lazy hands dawdling from out the tight sleeves, and in the lazy hands a little book, which my lad held up to his face, and which I dare say so charmed and ravished him, that he was blind to the beautiful sights around him; unmindful, I would venture to lay any wager, of the lessons he had to learn for to-morrow; forgetful of mother waiting supper, and father preparing a scolding;—absorbed utterly and entirely in his book.

What was it that so fascinated the young student, as he stood by the river shore? Not the *Pons Asinorum*. What book so delighted him, and blinded him to all the rest of the world, so that he did not care to see the apple-woman with her fruit, or (more tempting still to sons of Eve) the pretty girls with their apple cheeks, who laughed and prattled round the fountain! What was the book? Do you suppose it was Livy, or the Greek grammar? No; it was a NOVEL that you were reading, you lazy, not very clean, good-for-nothing, sensible boy! It was D'Artagnan locking up General Monk in a box, or almost succeeding in keeping Charles the First's

head on. It was the prisoner of the Château d'If cutting himself out of the sack fifty feet under water (I mention the novels I like best myself—novels without love or talking, or any of that sort of nonsense, but containing plenty of fighting, escaping, robbery, and rescuing)—cutting himself out of the sack, and swimming to the island of Monte Cristo. O Dumas! O thou brave, kind, gallant old Alexandre! I hereby offer thee homage, and give thee thanks for many pleasant hours. I have read thee (being sick in bed) for thirteen hours of a happy day, and had the ladies of the house fighting for the volumes. Be assured that lazy boy was reading Dumas (or I will go so far as to let the reader here pronounce the eulogium, or insert the name of his favourite author); and as for the anger, or it may be, the reverberations of his schoolmaster, or the remonstrances of his father, or the tender pleadings of his mother that he should not let the supper grow cold—I don't believe the scapegrace cared one fig. No! Figs are sweet, but fictions are sweeter.

Have you ever seen a score of white-bearded, white-robed warriors, or grave seniors of the city, seated at the gate of Jaffa or Beyrout, and listening to the story-teller reciting his marvels out of "Antar" or the "Arabian Nights?" I was once present when a young gentleman at table put a tart

away from him, and said to his neighbour, the Younger Son (with rather a fatuous air), "I never eat sweets."

"Not eat sweets! and do you know why?" says T.

"Because I am past that kind of thing," says the young gentleman.

"Because you are a glutton and a sot!" cries the Elder (and Juvenis winces a little). "All people who have natural, healthy appetites, love sweets; all children, all women, all Eastern people, whose tastes are not corrupted by gluttony and strong drink." And a plateful of raspberries and cream disappeared before the philosopher.

You take the allegory? Novels are sweets. All people with healthy literary appetites love them—almost all women;—a vast number of clever, hard-headed men. Why, one of the most learned physicians in England said to me only yesterday, "I have just read *So-and-So* for the second time" (naming one of Jones's exquisite fictions). Judges, bishops, chancellors, mathematicians, are notorious novel-readers; as well as young boys and sweet girls, and their kind, tender mothers. Who has not read about Eldon, and how he cried over novels every night when he was not at whist?

As for that lazy naughty boy at Chur, I doubt whether *he* will like novels when he is thirty years of age. He is taking too great a glut of them now. He is eating jelly until he will be sick. He will know most plots by the time he is twenty, so that *he* will never be surprised when the Stranger turns out to be the rightful earl,—when the old waterman, throwing off his beggarly gabardine, shows his stars and the collars of his various orders, and clasping Antonia to his bosom, proves himself to be the prince, her long-lost father. He will recognize the novelist's same characters, though they appear in red-heeled pumps and *ailes-de-pigeon*, or the garb of the nineteenth century. He will get weary of sweets, as boys of private schools grow (or used to grow, for I have done growing some little time myself, and the practice may have ended too)—as private school-boys used to grow tired of the pudding before their mutton at dinner.

And pray what is the moral of this apologue? The moral I take to be this: the appetite for novels extending to the end of the world; far away in the frozen deep, the sailors reading them to one another during the endless night;—far away under the Syrian stars, the solemn sheikhs and elders hearken-
ing to the poet as he recites his tales; far away in the Indian camps, where the soldiers listen to

——'s tales, or ——'s, after the hot day's march; far away in little Chur yonder, where the lazy boy pores over the fond volume, and drinks it in with all his eyes;—the demand being what we know it is, the merchant must supply it, as he will supply saddles and pale ale for Bombay or Calcutta.

But as surely as the cadet drinks too much pale ale, it will disagree with him; and so surely, dear youth, will too much novels cloy on thee. I wonder, do novel-writers themselves read many novels? If you go into Gunter's, you don't see those charming young ladies (to whom I present my most respectful compliments) eating tarts and ices, but at the proper even-tide they have good plain wholesome tea and bread-and-butter. Can anybody tell me does the author of the "Tale of Two Cities" read novels? does the author of the "Tower of London" devour romances? does the dashing "Harry Lorrequer" delight in "Plain or Ringlets" or "Sponge's Sporting Tour?" Does the veteran, from whose flowing pen we had the books which delighted our young days, "Darnley," and "Riche-lieu," and "Delorme,"* relish the works of Alex-

* By the way, what a strange fate is that which befell the veteran novelist! He was appointed her Majesty's Consul-General in Venice, the only city in Europe where the famous "Two Cavaliers" cannot by any possibility be seen riding together.

andre the Great, and thrill over the "Three Musqueteers?" Does the accomplished author of the "Caxtons" read the other tales in *Blackwood*? (For example, that ghost-story printed last August, and which for my part, though I read it in the public reading-room at the "Pavilion Hotel" at Folkestone, I protest frightened me so that I scarce dared look over my shoulder.) Does "Uncle Tom" admire "Adam Bede;" and does the author of the "Vicar of Wrexhill" laugh over the "Warden" and the "The Three Clerks?" Dear youth of ingenuous countenance and ingenuous pudor! I make no doubt that the eminent parties above named all partake of novels in moderation—eat jellies—but mainly nourish themselves upon wholesome roast and boiled.

Here, dear youth aforesaid! our *Cornhill Magazine* owners strive to provide thee with facts as well as fiction; and though it does not become them to brag of their Ordinary, at least they invite thee to a table where thou shalt sit in good company. That story of the "Fox"* was written by one of the gallant seamen who sought for poor Franklin under the awful Arctic Night: that account of China** is told by the man of all the empire most

* "The Search for Sir John Franklin. (From the Private Journal of an Officer of the 'Fox.')

** "The Chinese and the Outer Barbarians." By Sir John Bowring.

likely to know of what he speaks: those pages regarding Volunteers* come from an honoured hand that has borne the sword in a hundred famous fields, and pointed the British guns in the greatest siege in the world.

Shall we point out others? We are fellow-travellers, shall make acquaintance as the voyage proceeds. In the Atlantic steamers, on the first day out (and on high- and holy-days subsequently), the jellies set down on table are richly ornamented; *medioque in fonte leporum* rise the American and British flags nobly emblazoned in tin. As the passengers remark this pleasing phenomenon, the Captain no doubt improves the occasion by expressing a hope, to his right and left, that the flag of Mr. Bull and his younger Brother may always float side by side in friendly emulation. Novels having been previously compared to jellies—here are two (one perhaps not entirely saccharine, and flavoured with an *amari aliquid* very distasteful to some palates)—two novels** under two flags, the one that ancient ensign which has hung before the well-known booth of “Vanity Fair;” the other that fresh and handsome standard which has lately been

* “Our Volunteers.” By Sir John Burgoyne.

** “Lovel the Widower” and “Framley Parsonage.”

hoisted on "Barchester Towers." Pray, sir, or madam, to which dish will you be helped?

So have I seen my friends Captain Lang and Captain Comstock press their guests to partake of the fare on that memorable "First day out," when there is no man, I think, who sits down but asks a blessing on his voyage, and the good ship dips over the bar, and bounds away into the blue water.

ON TWO CHILDREN IN BLACK.

MONTAIGNE and "Howel's Letters" are my bedside books. If I wake at night, I have one or other of them to prattle me to sleep again. They talk about themselves for ever, and don't weary me. I like to hear them tell their old stories over and over again. I read them in the dozy hours, and only half remember them. I am informed that both of them tell coarse stories. I don't heed them. It was the custom of their time, as it is of Highlanders and Hottentots, to dispense with a part of dress which we all wear in cities. But people can't afford to be shocked either at Cape Town or at Inverness every time they meet an individual who wears his national airy raiment. I never knew the "Arabian Nights" was an improper book until I happened

once to read it in a "family edition." Well, *qui s'excuse*. . . Who, pray, has accused me as yet? Here am I smothering dear good old Mrs. Grundy's objections, before she has opened her mouth. I love, I say, and scarce ever tire of hearing, the artless prattle of those two dear old friends, the Perigourdin gentleman and the priggish little Clerk of King Charles's Council. Their egotism in nowise disgusts me. I hope I shall always like to hear men, in reason, talk about themselves. What subject does a man know better? If I stamp on a friend's corn, his outcry is genuine—he confounds my clumsiness in the accents of truth. He is speaking about himself, and expressing his emotion of grief or pain in a manner perfectly authentic and veracious. I have a story of my own, of a wrong done to me by somebody, as far back as the year 1838: whenever I think of it, and have had a couple glasses of wine, I *cannot* help telling it. The toe is stamped upon: the pain is just as keen as ever: I cry out, and perhaps utter imprecatory language. I told the story only last Wednesday at dinner:—

"Mr. Roundabout," says a lady sitting by me, "how comes it that in your books there is a certain class (it may be of men, or it may be of women, but that is not the question in point)—how comes

it, dear sir, there is a certain class of persons whom you always attack in your writings, and savagely rush at, goad, poke, toss up in the air, kick, and trample on?"

I couldn't help myself. I knew I ought not to do it. I told her the whole story, between the entrées and the roast. The wound began to bleed again. The horrid pang was there, as keen and as fresh as ever. If I live half as long as Tithonus,* that crack across my heart can never be cured. There are wrongs and griefs that *can't* be mended. It is all very well of you, my dear Mrs. G., to say that this spirit is unchristian, and that we ought to forgive and forget, and so forth. How can I forget at will? How forgive? I can forgive the occasional waiter who broke my beautiful old decanter at that very dinner. I am not going to do him any injury. But all the powers on earth can't make that claret-jug whole.

So, you see, I told the lady the inevitable story. I was egotistical. I was selfish, no doubt; but I was natural, and was telling the truth. You say you are angry with a man for talking about him-

* "Tithonus," by Tennyson, had appeared in the preceding (the 2nd) number of the *Cornhill Magazine*.

self. It is because you yourself are selfish, that that other person's Self does not interest you. Be interested by other people and with their affairs. Let them prattle and talk to you, as I do my dear old egotists just mentioned. When you have had enough of them, and sudden hazes come over your eyes, lay down the volume; pop out the candle, and *dormez bien*. I should like to write a nightcap book—a book that you can muse over, that you can smile over, that you can yawn over—a book of which you can say, “Well, this man is so and so and so and so; but he has a friendly heart (although some wiseacres have painted him as black as Bogey), and you may trust what he says.” I should like to touch you sometimes with a reminiscence that shall waken your sympathy, and make you say, *Io anchè* have so thought, felt, smiled, suffered. Now, how is this to be done except by egotism? *Linea recta brevissima*. That right line “I” is the very shortest, simplest, straight-forwardest means of communication between us, and stands for what it is worth and no more. Sometimes authors say, “The present writer has often remarked;” or, “The undersigned has observed;” or “Mr. Roundabout presents his compliments to the gentle reader, and begs to state,” &c.: but “I” is better and straighter than all these grimaces of

modesty: and although these are Roundabout Papers, and may wander who knows whither, I shall ask leave to maintain the upright and simple perpendicular. When this bundle of egotisms is bound up together, as they may be one day, if no accident prevents this tongue from wagging, or this ink from running, they will bore you very likely; so it would to read through "Howel's Letters" from beginning to end, or to eat up the whole of a ham: but a slice on occasion may have a relish: a dip into the volume at random and so on for a page or two: and now and then a smile; and presently a gape; and the book drops out of your hand; and so, *bon soir*, and pleasant dreams to you. I have frequently seen men at clubs asleep over their humble servant's works, and am always pleased. Even at a lecture I don't mind, if they don't snore. Only the other day when my friend A. said, "You've left off that Roundabout business, I see; very glad you have," I joined in the general roar of laughter at the table. I don't care a fig whether Archilochus likes the papers or no. You don't like partridge, Archilochus, or porridge, or what not? Try some other dish. I am not going to force mine down your throat, or quarrel with you if you refuse it. Once in America a clever and candid woman said to me, at the close of a dinner, during which I had

been sitting beside her, "Mr. Roundabout, I was told I should not like you; and I don't." "Well, ma'am," says I, in a tone of the most unfeigned simplicity, "I don't care." And we became good friends immediately, and esteemed each other ever after.

So, my dear Archilochus, if you come upon this paper, and say, "Fudge!" and pass on to another, I for one shall not be in the least mortified. If you say, "What does he mean by calling this paper *On Two Children in Black*, when there's nothing about people in black at all, unless the ladies he met (and evidently bored) at dinner, were black women? What is all this egotistical pother? A plague on his I's!" My dear fellow, if you read "Montaigne's Essays," you must own that he might call almost any one by the name of any other, and that an essay on the Moon or an essay on Green Cheese would be as appropriate a title as one of his on Coaches, on the Art of Discoursing, or Experience, or what you will. Besides, if I *have* a subject (and I have) I claim to approach it in a roundabout manner.

You remember Balzac's tale of the *Pearl de Chagrin*, and how every time the possessor used it for the accomplishment of some wish the fairy *Pearl*

shrank a little and the owner's life correspondingly shortened? I have such a desire to be well with my public that I am actually giving up my favourite story. I am killing my goose, I know I am. I can't tell my story of the children in black after this; after printing it, and sending it through the country. When they are gone to the printer's these little things become public property. I take their hands. I bless them. I say, "Good-by, my little dears." I am quite sorry to part with them: but the fact is, I have told all my friends about them already, and don't dare to take them about with me any more.

Now every word is true of this little anecdote, and I submit that there lies in it a most curious and exciting little mystery. I am like a man who gives you the last bottle of his '25 claret. It is the pride of his cellar; he knows it, and he has a right to praise it. He takes up the bottle, fashioned so slenderly—takes it up tenderly, cants it with care, places it before his friends, declares how good it is, with honest pride, and wishes he had a hundred dozen bottles more of the same wine in his cellar. *Si quid novisti*, &c. I shall be very glad to hear from you. I protest and vow I am giving you the best I have.

Well, who those little boys in black were, I shall

never probably know to my dying day. They were very pretty little men, with pale faces, and large, melancholy eyes; and they had beautiful little hands, and little boots, and the finest little shirts, and black paletots lined with the richest silk; and they had picture-books in several languages, English, and French, and German, I remember. Two more aristocratic-looking little men I never set eyes on. They were travelling with a very handsome, pale lady in mourning, and a maid-servant dressed in black, too; and on the lady's face there was the deepest grief. The little boys clambered and played about the carriage, and she sat watching. It was a railway-carriage from Frankfort to Heidelberg.

I saw at once that she was the mother of those children, and going to part from them. Perhaps I have tried parting with my own, and not found the business very pleasant. Perhaps I recollect driving down (with a certain trunk and carpet-bag on the box) with my own mother to the end of the avenue, where we waited—only a few minutes—until the whirring wheels of that “Defiance” coach were heard rolling towards us as certain as death. Twang goes the horn; up goes the trunk; down come the steps. Bah! I see the autumn evening: I hear the wheels now; I smart the cruel smart again: and,

boy or man, have never been able to bear the sight of people parting from their children.

I thought these little men might be going to school for the first time in their lives; and mamma might be taking them to the doctor, and would leave them with many fond charges, and little wistful secrets of love, bidding the elder to protect his younger brother, and the younger to be gentle, and to remember to pray to God always for his mother, who would pray for her boy too. Our party made friends with these young ones during the little journey; but the poor lady was too sad to talk except to the boys now and again, and sat in her corner, pale, and silently looking at them.

The next day, we saw the lady and her maid driving in the direction of the railway-station, *without the boys*. The parting had taken place, then. That night they would sleep among strangers. The little beds at home were vacant, and poor mother might go and look at them. Well, tears flow, and friends part, and mothers pray every night all over the world. I dare say we went to see Heidelberg Castle, and admired the vast shattered walls, and quaint gables; and the Neckar running its bright course through that charming scene of peace and beauty; and ate our dinner, and drank our wine with relish. The poor mother would eat but little

Abendessen that night; and, as for the children—that first night at school—hard bed, hard words, strange boys bullying, and laughing, and jarring you with their hateful merriment—as for the first night at a strange school, we most of us remember what *that* is. And the first is not the *worst*, my boys, there's the rub. But each man has his share of troubles, and, I suppose, you must have yours.

From Heidelberg we went to Baden-Baden: and, I dare say, saw Madame de Schlangenbad and Madame de la Cruchecassée, and Count Punter, and honest Captain Blackball. And whom should we see in the evening, but our two little boys, walking on each side of a fierce, yellow-faced, bearded man! We wanted to renew our acquaintance with them, and they were coming forward quite pleased to greet us. But the father pulled back one of the little men by his paletot, gave a grim scowl, and walked away. I can see the children now looking rather frightened away from us and up into the father's face, or the cruel uncle's—which was he? I think he was the father. So this was the end of them. Not school, as I at first had imagined. The mother was gone, who had given them the heaps of pretty books, and the pretty studs in the shirts, and the pretty silken clothes, and the tender—tender cares; and they were handed to this scowling

practitioner of Trente et Quarante. Ah! this is worse than school. Poor little men! poor mother sitting by the vacant little beds! We saw the children once or twice after, always in Scowler's company; but we did not dare to give each other any marks of recognition.

From Baden we went to Basle, and thence to Lucerne, and so over the St. Gothard into Italy. From Milan we went to Venice; and now comes the singular part of my story. In Venice there is a little court of which I forget the name: but in it is an apothecary's shop, whither I went to buy some remedy for the bites of certain animals which abound in Venice. Crawling animals, skipping animals, and humming, flying animals; all three will have at you at once; and one night nearly drove me into a strait-waistcoat. Well, as I was coming out of the apothecary's with the bottle of spirits of hartshorn in my hand (it really does do the bites a great deal of good), whom should I light upon but one of my little Heidelberg-Baden boys!

I have said how handsomely they were dressed as long as they were with their mother. When I saw the boy at Venice, who perfectly recognized me, his only garb was a wretched yellow cotton gown. His little feet, on which I had admired the little shiny boots, were *without shoe or stocking*. He looked

at me, ran to an old hag of a woman, who seized his hand; and with her he disappeared down one of the thronged lanes of the city.

From Venice we went to Trieste (the Vienna railway at that time was only opened as far as Laybach, and the magnificent Semmering Pass was not quite completed). At a station between Laybach and Graetz, one of my companions alighted for refreshment, and came back to the carriage saying:—

“There’s that horrible man from Baden, with the two little boys.”

Of course, we had talked about the appearance of the little boy at Venice, and his strange altered garb. My companion said they were pale, wretched-looking, and *dressed quite shabbily*.

I got out at several stations, and looked at all the carriages. I could not see my little men. From that day to this I have never set eyes on them. That is all my story. Who were they? What could they be? How can you explain that mystery of the mother giving them up; of the remarkable splendour and elegance of their appearance while under her care; of their bare-footed squalor in Venice, a month afterwards; of their shabby habiliments at Laybach? Had the father gambled away his money, and sold their clothes? How came they

to have passed out of the hands of a refined lady (as she evidently was, with whom I first saw them) into the charge of quite a common woman like her with whom I saw one of the boys at Venice? Here is but one chapter of the story. Can any man write the next, or that preceding the strange one on which I happened to light? Who knows? the mystery may have some quite simple solution. I saw two children, attired like little princes, taken from their mother and consigned to other care; and a fortnight afterwards, one of them barefooted and like a beggar. Who will read this riddle of *The Two Children in Black*?

ON RIBBONS.

THE uncle of the present Sir Louis N. Bonaparte, K.G., &c., inaugurated his reign as Emperor over the neighbouring nation by establishing an Order, to which all citizens of his country, military, naval, and civil—all men most distinguished in science, letters, arts, and commerce—were admitted. The emblem of the Order was but a piece of ribbon, more or less long or broad, with a toy at the end of it. The Bourbons had toys and ribbons of their own, blue, black, and all-coloured; and on their return to dominion such good old Tories would naturally have preferred to restore their good old Orders of Saint Louis, Saint Esprit, and Saint Michel; but France had taken the ribbon of the Legion of Honour so to her heart that no Bourbon sovereign dared to pluck it thence.

In England, until very late days, we have been accustomed rather to pooh-pooh national Orders, to vote ribbons and crosses tinsel gewgaws, foolish foreign ornaments, and so forth. It is known how the Great Duke (the breast of whose own coat was plastered with some half-hundred decorations) was averse to the wearing of ribbons, medals, clasps, and the like, by his army. We have all of us read how uncommonly distinguished Lord Castlereagh looked at Vienna, where he was the only gentleman present without any decoration whatever. And the Great Duke's theory was, that clasps and ribbons, stars and garters, were good and proper ornaments for himself, for the chief officers of his distinguished army, and for gentlemen of high birth, who might naturally claim to wear a band of garter blue across their waistcoats; but that for common people your plain coat, without stars and ribbons, was the most sensible wear.

And no doubt you and I are as happy, as free, as comfortable; we can walk and dine as well; we can keep the winter's cold out as well, without a star on our coats, as without a feather in our hats. How often we have laughed at the absurd mania of the Americans for dubbing their senators, members of Congress, and States' representatives, Honourable! We have a right to call *our* Privy Coun-

cillors Right Honourable, our Lords' sons Honourable, and so forth: but for a nation as numerous, well educated, strong, rich, civilized, free as our own, to dare to give its distinguished citizens titles of honour—monstrous assumption of low-bred arrogance and *parvenu* vanity! Our titles are respectable, but theirs absurd. Mr. Jones, of London, a Chancellor's son, and a tailor's grandson, is justly Honourable, and entitled to be Lord Jones at his noble father's decease: but Mr. Brown, the senator from New York, is a silly upstart for tacking Honourable to his name, and our sturdy British good sense laughs at him. Who has not laughed (I have myself) at Honourable Nahum Dodge, Honourable Zeno Scudder, Honourable Hiram Boake, and the rest? A score of such queer names and titles I have smiled at in America. And, *mutato nomine*? I meet a born idiot, who is a peer and born legislator. This drivelling noodle and his descendants through life are your natural superiors and mine—your and my children's superiors. I read of an alderman kneeling and knighted at court: I see a gold-stick waddling backwards before Majesty in a procession, and if we laugh, don't you suppose the Americans laugh too?

Yes, stars, garters, orders, knighthoods, and the like, are folly. Yes, Bobus, citizen and soap-boiler,

is a good man, and no one laughs at him or good Mrs. Bobus, as they have their dinner at one o'clock. But who will not jeer at Sir Thomas on a melting day, and Lady Bobus, at Margate, eating shrimps in a donkey-chaise? Yes, knighthood is absurd: and chivalry an idiotic superstition: and Sir Walter Manny was a zany: and Nelson, with his flaming stars and cordons, splendid upon a day of battle, was a madman: and Murat, with his crosses and orders, at the head of his squadrons charging victorious, was only a crazy mountebank, who had been a tavern-waiter, and was puffed up with absurd vanity about his dress and legs. And the men of the French line at Fontenoy, who told Messieurs de la Garde to fire first, were smirking French dancing-masters; and the Black Prince, waiting upon his royal prisoner, was acting an inane masquerade: and Chivalry is naught; and Honour is humbug; and Gentlemanhood is an extinct folly; and Ambition is madness; and desire of distinction is criminal vanity; and glory is bosh; and fair fame is idleness; and nothing is true but two and two; and the colour of all the world is drab; and all men are equal; and one man is as tall as another; and one man is as good as another—and a great deal better, as the Irish philosopher said.

Is this so? Titles and badges of honour are

vanity; and in the American Revolution you have his Excellency General Washington sending back, and with proper spirit sending back, a letter in which he is not addressed as Excellency and General. Titles are abolished; and the American Republic swarms with men claiming and bearing them. You have the French soldier cheered and happy in his dying agony, and kissing with frantic joy the chief's hand who lays the little cross on the bleeding bosom. At home you have the Dukes and Earls jobbing and intriguing for the Garter; the Military Knights grumbling at the Civil Knights of the Bath; the little ribbon eager for the collar; the soldiers and seamen from India and the Crimea marching in procession before the Queen, and receiving from her hands the cross bearing her royal name. And, remember, there are not only the cross wearers, but all the fathers and friends; all the women who have prayed for their absent heroes; Harry's wife, and Tom's mother, and Jack's daughter, and Frank's sweetheart, each of whom wears in her heart of hearts afterwards the badge which son, father, lover, has won by his merit; each of whom is made happy and proud, and is bound to the country by that little bit of ribbon.

I have heard, in a lecture about George the Third, that, at his accession, the King had a mind

to establish an order for literary men. It was to have been called the Order of Minerva—I suppose with an Owl for a badge. The knights were to have worn a star of sixteen points, and a yellow ribbon; and good old Samuel Johnson was talked of as President, or Grand Cross, or Grand Owl, of the society. Now about such an order as this there certainly may be doubts. Consider the claimants, the difficulty of settling their claims, the rows and squabbles amongst the candidates, and the subsequent decision of posterity! Dr. Beattie would have ranked as first poet, and twenty years after the sublime Mr. Hayley would, no doubt, have claimed the Grand Cross. Mr. Gibbon would not have been eligible, on account of his dangerous freethinking opinions; and her sex, as well as her republican sentiments, might have interfered with the knighthood of the immortal Mrs. Catharine Macaulay. How Goldsmith would have paraded the ribbon at Madame Cornelys's, or the Academy dinner! How Peter Pindar would have railed at it! Fifty years later, the noble Scott would have worn the Grand Cross and deserved it; but Gifford would have had it; and Byron, and Shelley, and Hazlitt, and Hunt would have been without it; and had Keats been proposed as officer, how the Tory

prints would have yelled with rage and scorn! Had the star of Minerva lasted to our present time——but I pause, not because the idea is dazzling, but too awful. Fancy the claimants, and the row about their precedence! Which philosopher shall have the grand cordon?—which the collar?—which the little scrap no bigger than a butter-cup? Of the historians—A, say,—and C, and F, and G, and S, and T,—which shall be Companion and which Grand Owl? Of the poets, who wears, or claims, the largest and brightest star? Of the novelists, there is A, and B and C D; and E (star of first magnitude, newly discovered), and F (a magazine of wit), and fair G, and H, and I, and brave old J, and charming K, and L, and M, and N, and O (fair twinklers), and I am puzzled between three P's—Peacock, Miss Pardoe, and Paul Pry—and Queechy, and R, and S, and T, *mère et fils*, and very likely U, O gentle reader, for who has not written his novel now-a-days?—who has not a claim to the star and straw-coloured ribbon?—and who shall have the biggest and largest? Fancy the struggle! Fancy the squabble! Fancy the distribution of prizes!

Who shall decide on them? Shall it be the sovereign? shall it be the Minister for the time being? and has Lord Palmerston made a deep study of

novels? In this matter the late Ministry,* to be sure, was better qualified; but even then, grumblers who had not got their canary cordons, would have hinted at professional jealousies entering the Cabinet; and, the ribbons being awarded, Jack would have scowled at his because Dick had a broader one; Ned been indignant because Bob's was as large: Tom would have thrust his into the drawer, and scorned to wear it at all. No—no: the so-called literary world was well rid of Minerva and her yellow ribbon. The great poets would have been indifferent, the little poets jealous, the funny men furious, the philosophers satirical, the historians supercilious, and, finally, the jobs without end. Say, ingenuity and cleverness are to be rewarded by State tokens and prizes—and take for granted the Order of Minerva is established—who shall have it? A great philosopher? no doubt we cordially salute him G.C.M. A great historian? G.C.M. of course. A great engineer? G.C.M. A great poet? received with acclamation G.C.M. A great painter? oh! certainly, G.C.M. If a great painter, why not a great novelist? Well, pass, great novelist, G.C.M. But if a poetic, a pictorial, a story-telling or music-

* That of Lord Derby, in 1859, which included Mr. Disraeli and Sir Edward Bulwer Lytton.

composing artist, why not a singing artist? Why not a basso-profondo? Why not a primo tenore? And if a singer, why should not a ballet-dancer come bounding on the stage with his cordon, and cut capers to the music of a row of decorated fiddlers? A chemist puts in his claim for having invented a new colour; an apothecary for a new pill; the cook for a new sauce; the tailor for a new cut of trousers. We have brought the star of Minerva down from the breast to the pantaloons. Stars and garters! can we go any farther; or shall we give the shoemaker the yellow ribbon of the order for his shoetie?

When I began this present Roundabout excursion, I think I had not quite made up my mind whether we would have an Order of all the Talents or not: perhaps I rather had a hankering for a rich ribbon and gorgeous star, in which my family might like to see me at parties in my best waistcoat. But then the door opens, and there come in, and by the same right too, Sir Alexis Soyer! Sir Alessandro Tamburini! Sir Agostino Velluti! Sir Antonio Paganini (violinist)! Sir Sandy McGuffog (piper to the most noble the Marquis of Farintosh)! Sir Alcide Flicflac (premier danseur of H.M. Theatre)! Sir Harley Quin and Sir Joseph Grimaldi (from Covent Garden)! They have all the yellow ribbon. They are all honourable, and clever, and distinguished

artists. Let us elbow through the rooms, make a bow to the lady of the house, give a nod to Sir George Thrum, who is leading the orchestra, and go and get some champagne and seltzer-water from Sir Richard Gunter, who is presiding at the buffet. A national decoration might be well and good: a token awarded by the country to all its *bene-merentibus*: but most gentlemen with Minerva stars would, I think, be inclined to wear very wide breast-collars to their coats. Suppose yourself, brother pen-man, decorated with this ribbon, and looking in the glass, would you not laugh? Would not wife and daughters laugh at that canary-coloured emblem?

But suppose a man, old or young, of figure ever so stout, thin, stumpy, homely, indulging in looking-glass reflections with that hideous ribbon and cross called V. C. on his coat, would he not be proud? and his family, would not they be prouder? For your nobleman there is the famous old blue garter and star, and welcome. If I were a marquis—if I had thirty—forty thousand a year (settle the sum, my dear Alnaschar, according to your liking), I should consider myself entitled to my seat in Parliament and to my garter. The garter belongs to the Ornamental Classes. Have you seen the new magnificent *Pavo Spicifer* at the Zoological Gardens, and do you grudge him his jewelled coronet and the azure

splendour of his waistcoat? I like my Lord Mayor to have a gilt coach; my magnificent monarch to be surrounded by magnificent nobles: I huzzay respectfully when they pass in procession. It is good for Mr. Briefless (50, Pump Court, fourth floor) that there should be a Lord Chancellor, with a gold robe and fifteen thousand a year. It is good for a poor curate that there should be splendid bishops at Fulham and Lambeth: their lordships were poor curates once, and have won, so to speak, their ribbon. Is a man who puts into a lottery to be sulky because he does not win the twenty thousand pounds prize? Am I to fall into a rage, and bully my family when I come home, after going to see Chatsworth or Windsor, because we have only two little drawing-rooms? Welcome to your garter, my lord, and shame upon him *qui mal y pense!*

So I arrive in my roundabout way near the point towards which I have been trotting ever since we set out.

In a voyage to America, some nine years since, on the seventh or eighth day out from Liverpool, Captain L—— came to dinner at eight bells as usual, talked a little to the persons right and left of him, and helped the soup with his accustomed politeness. Then he went on deck, and was back in a minute,

and operated on the fish, looking rather grave the while.

Then he went on deck again; and this time was absent, it may be, three or five minutes, during which the fish disappeared, and the *entrées* arrived, and the roast beef. Say ten minutes passed—I can't tell after nine years.

Then L—— came down with a pleased and happy countenance this time, and began carving the sirloin: “We have seen the light,” he said. “Madam, may I help you to a little gravy, or a little horse-radish?” or what not?

I forget the name of the light; nor does it matter. It was a point off Newfoundland for which he was on the look-out, and so well did the “Canada” know where she was, that, between soup and beef, the captain had sighted the headland by which his course was lying.

And so through storm and darkness, through fog and midnight, the ship had pursued her steady way over the pathless ocean and roaring seas, so surely that the officers who sailed her knew her place within a minute or two, and guided us with a wonderful providence safe on our way. Since the noble Cunard Company has run its ships, but one accident, and that through the error of a pilot, has happened on the line.

By this little incident (hourly of course repeated, and trivial to all sea-going people) I own I was immensely moved, and never can think of it but with a heart full of thanks and awe. We trust our lives to these seamen, and how nobly they fulfil their trust! They are, under heaven, as a providence for us. Whilst we sleep, their untiring watchfulness keeps guard over us. All night through that bell sounds at its season, and tells how our sentinels defend us. It rang when the "Amazon" was on fire, and chimed its heroic signal of duty, and courage, and honour. Think of the dangers these seamen undergo for us: the hourly peril and watch; the familiar storm; the dreadful iceberg; the long winter nights when the decks are as glass, and the sailor has to climb through icicles to bend the stiff sail on the yard! Think of their courage and their kindnesses in cold, in tempest, in hunger, in wreck! "The women and children to the boats," says the captain of the "Birkenhead," and, with the troops formed on the deck, and the crew obedient to the word of glorious command, the immortal ship goes down. Read the story of the "Sarah Sands:"—

"SARAH SANDS.

"The screw steam-ship 'Sarah Sands,' 1,330 registered tons, was chartered by the East India Company in the

autumn of 1858, for the conveyance of troops to India. She was commanded by John Squire Castle. She took out a part of the 54th Regiment, upwards of 350 persons, besides the wives and children of some of the men, and the families of some of the officers. All went well till the 11th November, when the ship had reached lat. 14 S., long. 56 E., upwards of 400 miles from the Mauritius.

“Between three and four p.m. on that day a very strong smell of fire was perceived arising from the after-deck, and upon going below into the hold, Captain Castle found it to be on fire, and immense volumes of smoke arising from it. Endeavours were made to reach the seat of the fire, but in vain; the smoke and heat were too much for the men. There was, however, no confusion. Every order was obeyed with the same coolness and courage with which it was given. The engine was immediately stopped. All sail was taken in, and the ship brought to the wind, so as to drive the smoke and fire, which was in the after-part of the ship, astern. Others were, at the same time, getting fire-hoses fitted and passed to the scene of the fire. The fire, however, continued to increase, and attention was directed to the ammunition contained in the powder-magazines, which were situated one on each side the ship immediately above the fire. The starboard magazine was soon cleared. But by this time the whole of the after-part of the ship was so much enveloped in smoke that it was scarcely possible to stand, and great fears were entertained on account of the port magazine. Volunteers were called for, and came immediately, and, under the guidance of Lieutenant Hughes, attempted to clear the port magazine, which they succeeded in doing, with the exception, as was supposed, of one or two barrels. It was most dangerous work. The men became overpowered with the smoke and heat, and fell; and several, while thus engaged, were dragged up by ropes, senseless.

"The flames soon burst up through the deck, and running rapidly along the various cabins, set the greater part on fire.

"In the meantime Captain Castle took steps for lowering the boats. There was a heavy gale at the time, but they were launched without the least accident. The soldiers were mustered on deck;—there was no rush to the boats;—and the men obeyed the word of command as if on parade. The men were informed that Captain Castle did not despair of saving the ship, but that they must be prepared to leave her if necessary. The women and children were lowered into the port lifeboat, under the charge of Mr. Very, third officer, who had orders to keep clear of the ship until recalled.

"Captain Castle then commenced constructing rafts of spare spars. In a short time, three were put together, which would have been capable of saving a great number of those on board. Two were launched overboard, and safely moored alongside, and then a third was left across the deck forward, ready to be launched.

"In the meantime the fire had made great progress. The whole of the cabins were one body of fire, and at about 8.30 p.m. flames burst through the upper deck, and shortly after the mizen rigging caught fire. Fears were entertained of the ship paying off, in which case the flames would have been swept forwards by the wind; but fortunately the after-braces were burnt through, and the main-yard swung round, which kept the ship's head to wind. About nine p.m., a fearful explosion took place in the port magazine, arising, no doubt, from the one or two barrels of powder which it had been impossible to remove. By this time the ship was one body of flame, from the stern to the main rigging, and thinking it scarcely possible to save her, Captain Castle called Major Brett (then in command of the troops, for the Colonel was in one of the boats) forward, and, telling him that he feared the

ship was lost, requested him to endeavour to keep order amongst the troops till the last, but, at the same time, to use every exertion to check the fire. Providentially, the iron bulkhead in the after-part of the ship withstood the action of the flames, and here all efforts were concentrated to keep it cool.

“‘No person,’ says the captain, ‘can describe the manner in which the men worked to keep the fire back; one party were below, keeping the bulk-head cool, and when several were dragged up senseless, fresh volunteers took their places, who were, however, soon in the same state. At about ten p.m., the maintopsail-yard took fire. Mr. Welch, one quartermaster, and four or five soldiers, went aloft with wet blankets, and succeeded in extinguishing it, but not until the yard and mast were nearly burnt through. The work of fighting the fire below continued for hours, and about midnight it appeared that some impression was made; and after that, the men drove it back, inch by inch, until daylight, when they had completely got it under. The ship was now in a frightful plight. The after-part was literally burnt out—merely the shell remaining—the port quarter blown out by the explosion: fifteen feet of water in the hold.’

“The gale still prevailed, and the ship was rolling and pitching in a heavy sea, and taking in large quantities of water abaft: the tanks, too, were rolling from side to side in the hold.

“As soon as the smoke was partially cleared away, Captain Castle got spare sails and blankets aft to stop the leak, passing two hawsers round the stern, and setting them up. The troops were employed baling and pumping. This continued during the whole morning.

“In the course of the day the ladies joined the ship. The boats were ordered alongside, but they found the sea too heavy to remain there. The gig had been abandoned during the night, and the crew, under Mr. Wood, fourth

officer, had got into another of the boats. The troops were employed the remainder of the day baling and pumping, and the crew securing the stern. All hands were employed during the following night baling and pumping, the boats being moored alongside, where they received some damage. At daylight, on the 13th, the crew were employed hoisting the boats, the troops were working manfully baling and pumping. Latitude at noon, 13 deg. 12 min. south. At five p.m., the foresail and foretopsail were set, the rafts were cut away, and the ship bore for the Mauritius. On Thursday, the 19th, she sighted the Island of Rodrigues, and arrived at Mauritius on Monday the 23rd."

The Nile and Trafalgar are not more glorious to our country, are not greater victories than these won by our merchant-seamen. And if you look in the Captains' reports of any maritime register, you will see similar acts recorded every day. I have such a volume for last year, now lying before me. In the second number, as I open it at hazard, Captain Roberts, master of the ship "Empire," from Shields to London, reports how on the 14th ult. (the 14th December, 1859), he, "being off Whitby, discovered the ship to be on fire between the main hold and boilers: got the hose from the engine laid on, and succeeded in subduing the fire; but only apparently; for at seven the next morning, the 'Dudgeon' bearing S.S.E. seven miles' distance, the fire again broke out, causing the ship to be en-

veloped in flames on both sides of midships: got the hose again into play and all hands to work with buckets to combat with the fire. Did not succeed in stopping it till four P.M., to effect which, were obliged to cut away the deck and top sides, and throw overboard part of the cargo. The vessel was very much damaged and leaky: determined to make for the Humber. Ship was run on shore, on the mud, near Grimsby harbour, with five feet of water in her hold. The donkey-engine broke down. The water increased so fast as to put out the furnace fires and render the ship almost unmanageable. On the tide flowing, a tug towed the ship off the mud, and got her into Grimsby to repair."

On the 2nd of November, Captain Strickland, of the "Purchase" brigantine, from Liverpool to Yarmouth, U.S., "encountered heavy gales from W.N.W. to W.S.W., in lat. 43° N., long. 34° W., in which we lost jib, foretopmast, staysail, topsail, and carried away the foretopmast stays, bobstays and bowsprit, headsails, cut-water and stern, also started the wood ends, which caused the vessel to leak. Put her before the wind and sea, and hove about twenty-five tons of cargo overboard to lighten the ship forward. Slung myself in a bowline, and by means of thrusting $2\frac{1}{2}$ -inch rope in the opening, contrived to stop a great portion of the leak.

"*December 16th.*—The crew continuing night and day at the pumps, could not keep the ship free; deemed it prudent for the benefit of those concerned to bear up for the nearest port. On arriving in lat. $48^{\circ} 45'$ N., long. 23° W., observed a vessel with a signal of distress flying. Made towards her, when she proved to be the barque 'Carleton,' water-logged. The captain and crew asked to be taken off. Hove to, and received them on board, consisting of thirteen men: and their ship was abandoned. We then proceeded on our course, the crew of the abandoned vessel assisting all they could to keep my ship afloat. We arrived at Cork harbour on the 27th ult."

Captain Coulson, master of the brig "Othello," reports that his brig foundered off Portland, December 27;—encountering a strong gale, and shipping two heavy seas in succession, which hove the ship on her beam-ends. "Observing no chance of saving the ship, took to the long boat, and within ten minutes of leaving her saw the brig founder. We were picked up the same morning by the French ship 'Commerce de Paris,' Captain Tombarel."

Here, in a single column of a newspaper, what strange, touching pictures do we find of seamen's dangers, vicissitudes, gallantry, generosity! The

ship on fire—the captain in the gale slinging himself in a bowline to stop the leak—the Frenchman in the hour of danger coming to his British comrade's rescue—the brigantine, almost a wreck, working up to the barque with the signal of distress flying, and taking off her crew of thirteen men.

“We then proceeded on our course, *the crew of the abandoned vessel assisting all they could to keep my ship afloat.*” What noble, simple words! What courage, devotedness, brotherly love! Do they not cause the heart to beat, and the eyes to fill?

This is what seamen do daily, and for one another. One lights occasionally upon different stories. It happened, not very long since, that the passengers by one of the great ocean steamers were wrecked, and, after undergoing the most severe hardships, were left, destitute and helpless, at a miserable coaling port. Amongst them were old men, ladies, and children. When the next steamer arrived, the passengers by that steamer took alarm at the haggard and miserable appearance of their unfortunate predecessors, and actually *remonstrated with their own captain, urging him not to take the poor creatures on board.* There was every excuse, of course. The last-arrived steamer was already dangerously full: the cabins were crowded; there were sick and delicate people on board—sick and

delicate people who had paid a large price to the company for room, food, comfort, already not too sufficient. If fourteen of us are in an omnibus, will we see three or four women outside and say, "Come in, because this is the last 'bus, and it rains?" Of course not: but think of that remonstrance, and of that Samaritan master of the "Purchase" brigantine!

In the winter of '53, I went from Marseilles to Civita Vecchia, in one of the magnificent P. and O. ships, the "Valetta," the master of which subsequently did distinguished service in the Crimea. This was his first Mediterranean voyage, and he sailed his ship by the charts alone, going into each port as surely as any pilot. I remember walking the deck at night with this most skilful, gallant, well-bred, and well-educated gentleman, and the glow of eager enthusiasm with which he assented, when I asked him whether he did not think a RIBBON or ORDER would be welcome or useful in his service.

Why is there not an ORDER OF BRITANNIA for British seamen? In the Merchant and the Royal Navy alike, occur almost daily instances and occasions for the display of science, skill, bravery, fortitude in trying circumstances, resource in danger. In the first number of the *Cornhill Magazine*, a

friend contributed a most touching story of the M'Clintock expedition, in the dangers and dreadful glories of which he shared; and the writer was a merchant captain. How many more are there (and, for the honour of England, may there be many like him!)—gallant, accomplished, high-spirited, enterprising masters of their noble profession! Can our fountain of Honour not be brought to such men? It plays upon captains and colonels in seemly profusion. It pours forth not illiberal rewards upon doctors and judges. It sprinkles mayors and aldermen. It bedews a painter now and again. It has spirited a baronetcy upon two, and bestowed a coronet upon one noble man of letters. Diplomatsists take their Bath in it as of right; and it flings out a profusion of glittering stars upon the nobility of the three kingdoms. Cannot Britannia find a ribbon for her sailors? The Navy, royal or mercantile, is a *Service*. The command of a ship, or the conduct of her, implies danger, honour, science, skill, subordination, good faith. It may be a victory, such as that of the "Sarah Sands;" it may be discovery, such as that of the "Fox;" it may be heroic disaster, such as that of the "Birkenhead;" and in such events merchant seamen, as well as royal seamen, take their share.

Why is there not, then, an Order of Britannia?

One day a young officer of the "Euryalus"* may win it; and, having just read the memoirs of LORD DUNDONALD, I know who ought to have the first Grand Cross.

* Prince Alfred was serving on board the frigate "Euryalus" when this was written.

ON SOME LATE GREAT VICTORIES.

On the 18th day of April last I went to see a friend in a neighbouring Crescent, and on the steps of the next house beheld a group something like that here depicted. A news-boy had stopped in his walk, and was reading aloud the journal which it was his duty to deliver; a pretty orange-girl, with a heap of blazing fruit, rendered more brilliant by one of those great blue papers in which oranges are now artfully wrapped, leant over the railing and listened; and opposite the *nympham discentem* there was a capering and acute-eared young satirist of a crossing-sweeper, who had left his neighbouring professional avocation and chance of profit, in order to listen to the tale of the little news-boy.

That intelligent reader, with his hand following the line as he read it out to his audience, was saying:—"And—now—Tom—coming up smiling—after his fall—dee—delivered a rattling clinker upon the Benicia Boy's—potato-trap—but was met by a—punisher on the nose—which," &c. &c.: or words to that effect. Betty at 52 let me in, while the boy was reading his lecture; and, having been some twenty minutes or so in the house and paid my visit, I took leave.

The little lecturer was still at work on the 51 doorstep, and his audience had scarcely changed their position. Having read every word of the battle myself in the morning, I did not stay to listen further; but if the gentleman who expected his paper at the usual hour that day experienced delay and a little disappointment I shall not be surprised.

I am not going to expatiate on the battle. I have read in the correspondent's letter of a Northern newspaper, that in the midst of the company assembled the reader's humble servant was present, and in a very polite society, too, of "poets, clergymen, men of letters, and members of both Houses of Parliament." If so, I must have walked to the station in my sleep, paid three guineas in a profound

fit of mental abstraction, and returned to bed unconscious, for I certainly woke there about the time when history relates that the fight was over. I do not know whose colours I wore—the Benician's, or those of the Irish champion; nor remember where the fight took place, which, indeed, no somnambulist is bound to recollect. Ought Mr. Sayers to be honoured for being brave, or punished for being naughty? By the shade of Brutus the elder, I don't know.

In George II.'s time there was a turbulent navy lieutenant (Handsome Smith he was called—his picture is at Greenwich now, in brown velvet, and gold and scarlet; his coat handsome, his waistcoat exceedingly handsome; but his face by no means the beauty)—there was, I say, a turbulent young lieutenant who was broke on a complaint of the French ambassador, for obliging a French ship of war to lower her topsails to his ship at Spithead. But, by the King's orders, Tom was next day made Captain Smith. Well, if I were absolute king, I would send Tom Sayers to the mill for a month, and make him Sir Thomas on coming out of Clerkenwell. You are a naughty boy, Tom! but then, you know, we ought to love our brethren, though ever so naughty. We are moralists, and reprimand you; and you are hereby reprimanded

accordingly. But in case England should ever have need of a few score thousand champions, who laugh at danger; who cope with giants; who, stricken to the ground, jump up and gaily rally, and fall, and rise again, and strike, and die rather than yield—in case the country should need such men, and you should know them, be pleased to send lists of the misguided persons to the principal police stations, where means may some day be found to utilize their wretched powers, and give their deplorable energies a right direction. Suppose, Tom, that you and your friends are pitted against an immense invader—suppose you are bent on holding the ground, and dying there, if need be—suppose it is life, freedom, honour, home, you are fighting for, and there is a death-dealing sword or rifle in your hand, with which you are going to resist some tremendous enemy who challenges your championship on your native shore? Then, Sir Thomas, resist him to the death, and it is all right: kill him, and heaven bless you. Drive him into the sea, and there destroy, smash, and drown him; and let us sing *Laudamus*. In these national cases, you see, we override the indisputable first laws of morals. Loving your neighbour is very well, but suppose your neighbour comes over from Calais and Boulogne to rob you of your laws, your liberties, your newspapers, your parliament

(all of which *some* dear neighbours of ours have given up in the most self-denying manner): suppose any neighbour were to cross the water and propose this kind of thing to us? Should we not be justified in humbly trying to pitch him into the water? If it were the King of Belgium himself we must do so. I mean that fighting, of course, is wrong; but that there are occasions when, &c.—I suppose I mean that that one-handed fight of Sayers is one of the most spirit-stirring little stories ever told: and, with every love and respect for Morality—my spirit says to her, “Do, for goodness’ sake, my dear madam, keep your true, and pure, and womanly, and gentle remarks for another day. Have the great kindness to stand a *leetle* aside, and just let us see one or two more rounds between the men. That little man with the one hand powerless on his breast facing yonder giant for hours, and felling him, too, every now and then! It is the little ‘Java’ and the ‘Constitution’ over again.”

I think it is a most fortunate event for the brave Heenan, who has acted and written since the battle with a true warrior’s courtesy, and with a great deal of good logic too, that the battle was a drawn one. The advantage was all on Mr. Sayers’ side. Say a young lad of sixteen insults me in the street, and I try and thrash him, and do it. Well, I have thrashed

a young lad. You great, big tyrant, couldn't you hit one of your own size? But say the lad thrashes me? In either case I walk away discomfited: but in the latter, I am positively put to shame. Now, when the ropes were cut from that death-grip, and Sir Thomas released, the gentleman of Benicia was confessedly blind of one eye, and speedily afterwards was blind of both. Could Mr. Sayers have held out for three minutes, for five minutes, for ten minutes more? He says he could. So we say *we* could have held out, and did, and had beaten off the enemy at Waterloo, even if the Prussians hadn't come up. The opinions differ pretty much according to the nature of the opinants. I say the Duke and Tom could have held out, that they meant to hold out, that they did hold out, and that there has been fistifying enough. That crowd which came in and stopped the fight ought to be considered like one of those divine clouds which the gods send in Homer:

“Apollo shrouds

The godlike Trojan in a veil of clouds.”

It is the best way of getting the god-like Trojan out of the scrape, don't you see? The *nodus* is cut; Tom is out of chancery; the Benicia Boy not a bit

the worse, nay, better than if he had beaten the little man. He has not the humiliation of conquest. He is greater, and will be loved more hereafter by the gentle sex. Suppose he had overcome the god-like Trojan? Suppose he had tied Tom's corpse to his cab-wheels, and driven to Farnham, smoking the pipe of triumph? Faugh! the great hulking conqueror! Why did you not hold your hand from yonder hero? Everybody, I say, was relieved by that opportune appearance of the British gods, protectors of native valour, who interfered, and "withdrew" their champion.

Now, suppose six-feet-two conqueror, and five-feet-eight beaten; would Sayers have been a whit the less gallant and meritorious? If Sancho had been allowed *really* to reign in Baratania, I make no doubt that, with his good sense and kindness of heart, he would have devised some means of rewarding the brave vanquished, as well as the brave victors in the Baratarian army, and that a champion who had fought a good fight would have been a knight of King Don Sancho's orders, whatever the upshot of the combat had been. Suppose Wellington overwhelmed on the plateau of Mont St. John; suppose Washington attacked and beaten at Valley Forge—and either supposition is quite easy—and what becomes of the heroes? They would have been

as brave, honest, heroic, wise; but their glory, where would it have been? Should we have had their portraits hanging in our chambers? have been familiar with their histories? have pondered over their letters, common lives, and daily sayings? There is not only merit, but luck which goes to making a hero out of a gentleman. Mind, please you, I am not saying that the hero is after all not so very heroic; and have not the least desire to grudge him his merit because of his good fortune.

Have you any idea whither this Roundabout Essay on some late great victories is tending? Do you suppose that by those words I mean Trenton, Brandywine, Salamanca, Vittoria, and so forth? By a great victory I can't mean that affair at Farnham, for it was a drawn fight. Where, then, are the victories, pray, and when are we coming to them?

My good sir, you will perceive that in this Nicæan discourse I have only as yet advanced as far as this—that a hero, whether he wins or loses, is a hero; and that if a fellow will but be honest and courageous, and do his best, we are for paying all honour to him. Furthermore, it has been asserted that Fortune has a good deal to do with the making of heroes; and thus hinted for the consola-

tion of those who don't happen to be engaged in any stupendous victories, that, had opportunity so served, they might have been heroes too. If you are not, friend, it is not your fault, whilst I don't wish to detract from any gentleman's reputation who is. There. My worst enemy can't take objection to that. The point might have been put more briefly perhaps; but, if you please, we will not argue that question.

Well, then. The victories which I wish especially to commemorate in this paper, are the six great, complete, prodigious, and undeniable victories, achieved by the corps which the editor of the *Cornhill Magazine* has the honour to command. When I seemed to speak disparagingly but now of generals, it was that chief I had in my I (if you will permit me the expression). I wished him not to be elated by too much prosperity; I warned him against assuming heroic imperatorial airs, and cocking his laurels too jauntily over his ear. I was his conscience, and stood on the splash-board of his triumph-car, whispering, "*Hominem memento te.*" As we rolled along the way, and passed the weather-cocks on the temples, I saluted the symbol of the goddess Fortune with a reverent awe. "We have done our little endeavour," I said, bowing my head,

“and mortals can do no more. But we might have fought bravely, and *not* won. We might have cast the coin, calling, ‘Head,’ and lo! Tail might have come uppermost.” O thou Ruler of Victories!—thou Awarder of Fame!—thou Giver of Crowns (and shillings)—if thou hast smiled upon us, shall we not be thankful? There is a Saturnine philosopher, standing at the door of his book-shop, who, I fancy, has a pooh-pooh expression as the triumph passes. (I can’t see quite clearly for the laurels, which have fallen down over my nose.) One hand is reining in the two white elephants that draw the car; I raise the other hand up to—to the laurels, and pass on, waving him a graceful recognition. Up the Hill of Ludgate—around the Pauline Square—by the side of Chepe—until it reaches our own Hill of Corn—the procession passes. The Emperor is bowing to the people; the captains of the legions are riding round the car, their gallant minds struck by the thought, “Have we not fought as well as yonder fellow, swaggering in the chariot, and are we not as good as he?” Granted, with all my heart, my dear lads. When your consulship arrives, may you be as fortunate. When these hands, now growing old, shall lay down sword and truncheon, may you mount the car, and ride to the temple of Jupiter.

Be yours the laurel then. *Neque me myrtus dedecet*, looking cosily down from the arbour where I sit under the arched vine.

I fancy the Emperor standing on the steps of the temple (erected by Titus) on the Mons Frumentarius, and addressing the citizens: "Quirites!" he says, "in our campaign of six months, we have been engaged six times, and in each action have taken near upon a *hundred thousand prisoners*. Go to! What are other magazines compared to our magazine? (Sound, trumpeter!) What banner is there like that of Cornhill? You, philosopher yonder!" (he shirks under his mantle.) "Do you know what it is to have a hundred and ten thousand readers? A hundred thousand readers? a hundred thousand *buyers!*" (Cries of "No!"—"Pooh!" "Yes, upon my honour!" "Oh, come!" and murmurs of applause and derision)—"I say more than a hundred thousand purchasers—and I believe *as much as a million* readers!" (Immense sensation.) "To these have we said an unkind word? We have enemies; have we hit them an unkind blow? Have we sought to pursue party aims, to forward private jobs, to advance selfish schemes? The only persons to whom wittingly we have given pain are some who have volunteered for our corps—and of these volunteers we have had *thousands.*" (Murmurs and grumbles.)

“What commander, citizens, could place all these men—could make officers of all these men?” (cries of “No—no!” and laughter)—“could say, ‘I accept this recruit, though he is too short for our standard, because he is poor, and has a mother at home who wants bread?’ could enrol this other, who is too weak to bear arms, because he says, ‘Look, sir, I shall be stronger anon.’ The leader of such an army as ours must select his men, not because they are good and virtuous, but because they are strong and capable. To these our ranks are ever open, and in addition to the warriors who surround me”—(the generals look proudly conscious)—“I tell you, citizens, that I am in treaty with other and most tremendous champions, who will march by the side of our veterans to the achievement of fresh victories. Now, blow trumpets! Bang, ye gongs! and drummers, drub the thundering skins! Generals and chiefs, we go to sacrifice to the gods.”

Crowned with flowers, the captains enter the temple, the other Magazines walking modestly behind them. The people huzza; and, in some instances, kneel and kiss the fringes of the robes of the warriors. The Philosopher puts up his shutters, and retires into his shop, deeply moved. In ancient times, Pliny (*apud* Smith) relates it was the custom of the Imperator “to paint his whole body a bright

red;" and, also, on ascending the Hill, to have some of the hostile chiefs led aside "to the adjoining prison, and put to death." We propose to dispense with both these ceremonies.

THORNS IN THE CUSHION.

In the Essay with which this volume commences, the *Cornhill Magazine* was likened to a ship sailing forth on her voyage, and the captain uttered a very sincere prayer for her prosperity. The dangers of storm and rock, the vast outlay upon ship and cargo, and the certain risk of the venture, gave the chief officer a feeling of no small anxiety; for who could say from what quarter danger might arise, and how his owner's property might be imperilled? After a six months' voyage, we with very thankful hearts could acknowledge our good fortune: and, taking up the apologue in the Roundabout manner, we composed a triumphal procession in honour of the Magazine, and imagined the Emperor thereof riding in a sublime car to return thanks in the Temple of

Victory. Cornhill is accustomed to grandeur and greatness, and has witnessed, every ninth of November, for I don't know how many centuries, a prodigious annual pageant, chariot, progress, and flourish of trumpet; and being so very near the Mansion House, I am sure the reader will understand how the idea of pageant and procession came naturally to my mind. The imagination easily supplied a gold coach, eight cream-coloured horses of your true Pegasus breed, huzzaing multitudes, running footmen, and clanking knights in armour, a chaplain and a sword-bearer with a muff on his head, scowling out of the coach-window, and a Lord Mayor all crimson, fur, gold-chain, and white ribbons, solemnly occupying the place of state. A playful fancy could have carried the matter farther, could have depicted the feast in the Egyptian Hall, the Ministers, Chief Justices, and right reverend prelates taking their seats round about his lordship, the turtle and other delicious viands, and Mr. Toole behind the central throne, bawling out to the assembled guests and dignitaries: "My Lord So-and-so, my Lord What-d'ye-call-'im, my Lord Etcætera, the Lord Mayor pledges you all in a loving-cup." Then the noble proceedings come to an end; Lord Simper proposes the ladies; the company rises from table, and adjourns to coffee and muffins. The carriages of the nobility and guests

roll back to the West. The Egyptian Hall, so bright just now, appears in a twilight glimmer, in which waiters are seen ransacking the dessert, and rescuing the spoons. His lordship and the Lady Mayoress go into their private apartments. The robes are doffed, the collar and white ribbons are removed. The Mayor becomes a man, and is pretty surely in a fluster about the speeches which he has just uttered; remembering too well now, wretched creature, the principal points which he *didn't* make when he rose to speak. He goes to bed to headache, to care, to repentance, and, I dare say, to a dose of something which his body-physician has prescribed for him. And there are ever so many men in the city who fancy that man happy!

Now, suppose that all through that 9th of November his lordship has had a racking rheumatism, or a toothache, let us say, during all dinner-time—through which he has been obliged to grin and mumble his poor old speeches. Is he enviable? Would you like to change with his lordship? Suppose that bumper which his golden footman brings him, instead i'fackins of ypcoras or canary, contains some abomination of senna? Away! Remove the golden goblet, insidious cup-bearer! You now begin to perceive the gloomy moral which I am about to draw,

Last month we sang the song of glorification, and rode in the chariot of triumph. It was all very well. It was right to huzza, and be thankful, and cry, Bravo, our side! and besides, you know, there was the enjoyment of thinking how pleased Brown, and Jones, and Robinson (our dear friends) would be at this announcement of success. But now that the performance is over, my good sir, just step into my private room, and see that it is not all pleasure—this winning of successes. Cast your eye over those newspapers, over those letters. See what the critics say of your harmless jokes, neat little trim sentences, and pet waggeries! Why, you are no better than an idiot; you are drivelling; your powers have left you; this always overrated writer is rapidly sinking to, &c.

This is not pleasant; but neither is this the point. It may be the critic is right, and the author wrong. It may be that the archbishop's sermon is not so fine as some of those discourses twenty years ago which used to delight the faithful in Granada. Or it may be (pleasing thought!) that the critic is a dullard, and does not understand what he is writing about. Everybody who has been to an exhibition has heard visitors discoursing about the pictures before their faces. One says, "This is very well;" another says, "This is stuff and rubbish;" another

cries, "Bravo! this is a masterpiece:" and each has a right to his opinion. For example, one of the pictures I admired most at the Royal Academy is by a gentleman on whom I never, to my knowledge, set eyes. This picture is No. 346, "Moses," by Mr. S. Solomon. I thought it had a great intention, I thought it finely drawn and composed. It nobly represented, to my mind, the dark children of the Egyptian bondage, and suggested the touching story. My newspaper says: "Two ludicrously ugly women, looking at a dingy baby, do not form a pleasing object;" and so good-by, Mr. Solomon. Are not most of our babies served so in life? and doesn't Mr. Robinson consider Mr. Brown's cherub an ugly, squalling little brat? So cheer up, Mr. S. S. It may be the critic who discoursed on your baby is a bad judge of babies. When Pharaoh's kind daughter found the child, and cherished and loved it, and took it home, and found a nurse for it, too, I dare say there were grim, brickdust-coloured chamberlains, or some of the tough, old, meagre, yellow princesses at court, who never had children themselves, who cried out, "Faugh! the horrid little squalling wretch!" and knew he would never come to good; and said, "Didn't I tell you so?" when he assaulted the Egyptian.

Never mind then, Mr. S. Solomon, I say, be-

cause a critic pooh-poohs your work of art—your Moses—your child—your foundling. Why, did not a wiseacre in *Blackwood's Magazine* lately fall foul of "Tom Jones?" O hypercritic! So, to be sure, did good old Mr. Richardson, who could write novels himself—but you, and I, and Mr. Gibbon, my dear sir, agree in giving our respect, and wonder, and admiration, to the brave old master.

In these last words I am supposing the respected reader to be endowed with a sense of humour, which he may or may not possess; indeed, don't we know many an honest man who can no more comprehend a joke than he can turn a tune. But I take for granted, my dear sir, that you are brimming over with fun—you mayn't make jokes, but you could if you would—you know you could: and in your quiet way you enjoy them extremely. Now many people neither make them, nor understand them when made, nor like them when understood, and are suspicious, testy, and angry with jokers. Have you ever watched an elderly male or female—an elderly "party," so to speak, who begins to find out that some young wag of the company is "chaffing" him? Have you ever tried the sarcastic or Socratic method with a child? Little simple he or she, in the innocence of the simple heart, plays some silly freak, or makes some absurd remark, which you turn to

ridicule. The little creature dimly perceives that you are making fun of him, writhes, blushes, grows uneasy, bursts into tears,—upon my word it is not fair to try the weapon of ridicule upon that innocent young victim. The awful objurgatory practice he is accustomed to. Point out his fault, and lay bare the dire consequences thereof: expose it roundly, and give him a proper, solemn, moral whipping—but do not attempt to *castigare ridendo*. Do not laugh at him writhing, and cause all the other boys in the school to laugh. Remember your own young days at school, my friend—the tingling cheeks, burning ears, bursting heart, and passion of desperate tears, with which you looked up, after having performed some blunder, whilst the doctor held you to public scorn before the class, and cracked his great clumsy jokes upon you—helpless, and a prisoner! Better the block itself, and the lictors, with their fasces of birch-twigs, than the maddening torture of those jokes!

Now, with respect to jokes—and the present company of course excepted—many people, perhaps most people, are as infants. They have little sense of humour. They don't like jokes. Raillery in writing annoys and offends them. The coarseness apart, I think I have met very, very few women who liked the banter of Swift and Fielding. Their

simple, tender natures revolt at laughter. Is the satyr always a wicked brute at heart, and are they rightly shocked at his grin, his leer, his horns, hoofs and ears? *Fi donc, le vilain monstre*, with his shrieks, and his capering crooked legs! Let him go and get a pair of well-wadded black silk stockings, and pull them over those horrid shanks; put a large gown and bands over beard and hide; and pour a dozen of lavender-water into his lawn handkerchief, and cry, and never make a joke again. It shall all be highly-distilled poesy, and perfumed sentiment, and gushing eloquence; and the foot *shan't* peep out, and a plague take it. Cover it up with the surplice. Out with your cambric, dear ladies, and let us all whimper together.

Now, then, hand on heart, we declare that it is not the fire of adverse critics which afflicts or frightens the editorial bosom. They may be right; they may be rogues who have a personal spite; they may be dullards who kick and bray as their nature is to do, and prefer thistles to pineapples; they may be conscientious, acute, deeply learned, delightful judges, who see your joke in a moment, and the profound wisdom lying underneath. Wise or dull, laudatory or otherwise, we put their opinions aside. If they applaud, we are pleased: if they shake their quick pens, and fly off with a hiss, we resign their

favours and put on all the fortitude we can muster. I would rather have the lowest man's good word than his bad one, to be sure; but as for coaxing a compliment, or wheedling him into good-humour, or stopping his angry mouth with a good dinner, or accepting his contributions for a certain Magazine, for fear of his barking or snapping elsewhere—*allons donc!* These shall not be our acts. Bow-wow, Cerberus! Here shall be no sop for thee, unless—unless Cerberus is an uncommonly good dog, when we shall bear no malice because he flew at us from our neighbour's gate.

What, then, is the main grief you spoke of as annoying you—the toothache in the Lord Mayor's jaw, the thorn in the cushion of the editorial chair? It is there. Ah! it stings me now as I write. It comes with almost every morning's post. At night I come home, and take my letters up to bed (not daring to open them), and in the morning I find one, two, three thorns on my pillow. Three I extracted yesterday; two I found this morning. They don't sting quite so sharply as they did; but a skin is a skin, and they bite, after all, most wickedly. It is all very fine to advertise on the Magazine, "Contributions are only to be sent to Messrs. Smith, Elder and Co., and not to the Editor's private residence." My dear sir, how little

you know man- or woman-kind, if you fancy they will take that sort of warning! How am I to know, (though, to be sure, I begin to know now,) as I take the letters off the tray, which of those envelopes contains a real *bonâ fide* letter, and which a thorn? One of the best invitations this year I mistook for a thorn-letter, and kept it without opening. This is what I call a thorn-letter:—

“Camberwell, June 4.

“SIR,—May I hope, may I entreat, that you will favour me by perusing the enclosed lines, and that they may be found worthy of insertion in the *Cornhill Magazine*. We have known better days, sir. I have a sick and widowed mother to maintain, and little brothers and sisters who look to me. I do my utmost as a governess to support them. I toil at night when they are at rest, and my own hand and brain are alike tired. If I could add but a *little* to our means by my pen, many of my poor invalid's wants might be supplied, and I could procure for her comforts to which she is now a stranger. Heaven knows it is not for want of *will* or for want of *energy* on my part, that she is now in ill-health, and our little household almost without bread. Do—do cast a kind glance over my poem, and if you can help us, the widow, the orphans will bless you! I remain, sir, in anxious expectancy,

“Your faithful servant,

“S. S. S.”

And enclosed is a little poem or two, and an envelope with its penny stamp—heaven help us!—and the writer's name and address.

Now you see what I mean by a thorn. Here is the case put with true female logic. "I am poor; I am good; I am ill; I work hard; I have a sick mother and hungry brothers and sisters dependent on me. You can help us if you will." And then I look at the paper, with the thousandth part of a faint hope that it may be suitable, and I find it won't do: and I knew it wouldn't do: and why is this poor lady to appeal to my pity and bring her poor little ones kneeling to my bedside, and calling for bread which I can give them if I choose? No day passes but that argument *ad misericordiam* is used. Day and night that sad voice is crying out for help. Thrice it appealed to me yesterday. Twice this morning it cried to me: and I have no doubt when I go to get my hat, I shall find it with its piteous face and its pale family about it, waiting for me in the hall. One of the immense advantages which women have over our sex is, that they actually like to read these letters. Like letters? O mercy on us! Before I was an editor I did not like the postman much:—but now!

A very common way with these petitioners is to begin with a fine flummery about the merits and eminent genius of the person whom they are addressing. But this artifice, I state publicly, is of no avail. When I see *that* kind of herb, I know

the snake within it, and fling it away before it has time to sting. Away, reptile, to the waste-paper basket, and thence to the flames!

But of these disappointed people, some take their disappointment and meekly bear it. Some hate and hold you their enemy because you could not be their friend. Some, furious and envious, say: "Who is this man who refuses what I offer, and how dares he, the conceited coxcomb, to deny my merit?"

Sometimes my letters contain not mere thorns, but bludgeons. Here are two choice slips from that noble Irish oak, which has more than once supplied alpeens for this meek and unoffending skull:—

"Theatre Royal, Donnybrook.

"SIR,—I have just finished reading the first portion of your Tale, *Lovel the Widower*, and am much surprised at the unwarrantable strictures you pass therein on the *corps de ballet*.

"I have been for more than ten years connected with the theatrical profession, and I beg to assure you that the majority of the *corps de ballet* are virtuous, well-conducted girls, and, consequently, that snug cottages are not taken for them in the Regent's Park.

"I also have to inform you that theatrical managers are in the habit of speaking good English, possibly better English than authors.

"You either know nothing of the subject in question, or you assert a wilful falsehood.

"I am happy to say that the characters of the *corps de ballet*, as also those of actors and actresses, are superior to the snarlings of dyspeptic libellers, or the spiteful attacks and *brutum fulmen* of ephemeral authors.

"I am, sir, your obedient servant,

"The Editor of the *Cornhill Magazine*. A. B. C."

"Theatre Royal, Donnybrook.

"SIR,—I have just read, in the *Cornhill Magazine* for January, the first portion of a Tale written by you, and entitled *Lovel de Widower*.

"In the production in question you employ all your malicious spite (and you have great capabilities that way) in trying to degrade the character of the *corps de ballet*. When you imply that the majority of ballet-girls have villas taken for them in the Regent's Park, *I say you tell a deliberate falsehood*.

"Haveing been brought up to the stage from infancy, and, though now an actress, haveing been seven years principal dancer at the opera, I am competent to speak on the subject. I am only surprised that so vile a libeller as yourself should be allowed to preside at the Dramatic Fund dinner on the 22nd instant. I think it would be much better if you were to reform your own life, instead of telling lies of those who are immeasurably your superiors.

"Yours in supreme disgust,

"A. D."

The signatures of the respected writers are altered, and for the site of their Theatre Royal an adjacent place is named, which (as I may have been falsely informed) used to be famous for quarrels, thumps, and broken heads. But, I

say, is this an easy chair to sit on, when you are liable to have a pair of such shillelaghs flung at it? And, prithee, what was all the quarrel about? In the little history of "Lovel the Widower" I described, and brought to condign punishment, a certain wretch of a ballet-dancer, who lived splendidly for awhile on ill-gotten gains, had an accident, and lost her beauty, and died poor, deserted, ugly, and every way odious. In the same page, other little ballet-dancers are described, wearing homely clothing, doing their duty, and carrying their humble savings to the family at home. But nothing will content my dear correspondents but to have me declare that the majority of ballet-dancers have villas in the Regent's Park, and to convict me of "deliberate falsehood." Suppose, for instance, I had chosen to introduce a red-haired washerwoman into a story? I might get an expostulatory letter saying, "Sir, in stating that the majority of washerwomen are red-haired, you are a liar, and you had best not speak of ladies who are immeasurably your superiors." Or suppose I had ventured to describe an illiterate haberdasher? One of the craft might write to me, "Sir, in describing haberdashers as illiterate, you utter a wilful falsehood. Haberdashers use much better English than authors." It is a mistake, to be sure. I have never said what my correspondents

say I say. There is the text under their noses, but what if they choose to read it their own way? "Hurroo, lads! Here's for a fight. There's a bald head peeping out of the hut. There's a bald head! It must be Tim Malone's." And whack! come down both the bludgeons at once.

Ah me! we wound where we never intended to strike; we create anger where we never meant harm; and these thoughts are the thorns in our Cushion. Out of mere malignity, I suppose, there is no man who would like to make enemies. But here, in this editorial business, you can't do otherwise: and a queer, sad, strange, bitter thought it is, that must cross the mind of many a public man: "Do what I will, be innocent or spiteful, be generous or cruel, there are A and B, and C and D, who will hate me to the end of the chapter—to the chapter's end—to the *Finis* of the page—when hate, and envy, and fortune, and disappointment shall be over."

ON SCREENS IN DINING-ROOMS.

A GRANDSON of the late Rev. Dr. Primrose (of Wakefield, vicar) wrote me a little note from his country living this morning, and the kind fellow had the precaution to write "No thorn" upon the envelope, so that, ere I broke the seal, my mind might be relieved of any anxiety lest the letter should contain one of those lurking stabs which are so painful to the present gentle writer. Your epigraph, my dear P., shows your kind and artless nature; but don't you see it is of no use? People who are bent upon assassinating you in the manner mentioned will write "No thorn" upon their envelopes too; and you open the case, and presently out flies a poisoned stiletto, which springs into a man's bosom, and makes the wretch howl with anguish.

When the bailiffs are after a man, they adopt all sorts of disguises, pop out on him from all conceivable corners, and tap his miserable shoulder. His wife is taken ill; his sweetheart, who remarked his brilliant, too brilliant appearance at the Hyde Park review, will meet him at Cremorne, or where you will. The old friend who has owed him that money these five years will meet him at so-and-so and pay. By one bait or other the victim is hooked, netted, landed, and down goes the basket-lid. It is not your wife, your sweetheart, your friend, who is going to pay you. It is Mr. Nab the bailiff. *You* know——you are caught. You are off in a cab to Chancery Lane.

You know, I say? *Why* should you know? I make no manner of doubt you never were taken by a bailiff in your life. I never was. I have been in two or three debtors' prisons, but not on my own account. Goodness be praised! I mean you can't escape your lot; and Nab only stands here metaphorically as the watchful, certain, and untiring officer of Mr. Sheriff Fate. Why, my dear Primrose, this morning along with your letter comes another, bearing the well-known superscription of another old friend, which I open without the least suspicion, and what do I find? A few lines from my friend Johnson, it is true, but they are written

on a page covered with feminine handwriting. "Dear Mr. Johnson," says the writer, "I have just been perusing with delight a most charming tale by the Archbishop of Cambray. It is called 'Telemachus;' and I think it would be admirably suited to the *Cornhill Magazine*. As you know the Editor, will you have the great kindness, dear Mr. Johnson, to communicate with him *personally* (as that is much better than writing in a roundabout way to the Publishers', and waiting goodness knows how long for an answer), and state my readiness to translate this excellent and instructive story. I do not wish to breathe *a word* against 'Lovel Parsonage,' 'Framley the Widower,' or any of the novels which have appeared in the *Cornhill Magazine*, but I *am sure* 'Telemachus' is as good as new to English readers, and in point of interest and morality *far*," &c. &c. &c.

There it is. I am stabbed through Johnson. He has lent himself to this attack on me. He is weak about women. Other strong men are. He submits to the common lot, poor fellow. In my reply I do not use a word of unkindness. I write him back gently, that I fear "Telemachus" won't suit us. He can send the letter on to his fair correspondent. But however soft the answer, I question whether the wrath will be turned away. Will there

not be a coolness between him and the lady? and is it not possible that henceforth her fine eyes will look with darkling glances upon the pretty orange cover of our Magazine?

Certain writers, they say, have a bad opinion of women. Now am I very whimsical in supposing that this disappointed candidate will be hurt at her rejection, and angry or cast down according to her nature? "Angry, indeed!" says Juno, gathering up her purple robes and royal raiment. "Sorry, indeed!" cries Minerva, lacing on her corselet again, and scowling under her helmet. (I imagine the well-known Apple case has just been argued and decided.) "Hurt, forsooth! Do you suppose *we* care for the opinion of that hobnailed lout of a Paris? Do you suppose that I, the Goddess of Wisdom, can't make allowances for mortal ignorance, and am so base as to bear malice against a poor creature who knows no better? You little know the goddess nature when you dare to insinuate that our divine minds are actuated by motives so base. A love of justice influences *us*. We are above mean revenge. We are too magnanimous to be angry at the award of such a judge in favour of such a creature." And rustling out their skirts, the ladies walk away together. This is all very well. You are bound to believe them. They are actuated by

no hostility: not they. They bear no malice—of course not. But when the Trojan war occurs presently, which side will they take? Many brave souls will be sent to Hades. Hector will perish. Poor old Priam's bald numskull will be cracked, and Troy town will burn, because Paris prefers golden-haired Venus to ox-eyed Juno and grey-eyed Minerva.

The last Essay of this Roundabout Series, describing the griefs and miseries of the editorial chair, was written, as the kind reader will acknowledge, in a mild and gentle, not in a warlike or satirical spirit. I showed how cudgels were applied; but surely, the meek object of persecution hit no blows in return. The beating did not hurt much, and the person assaulted could afford to keep his good-humour; indeed, I admired that brave though illogical little actress, of the T. R. D-bl-n, for her fiery vindication of her profession's honour. I assure her I had no intention to tell l—s—well, let us say, monosyllables—about my superiors: and I wish her nothing but well, and when Macmahon (or shall it be Mulligan?) *Roi d'Irlande* ascends his throne, I hope she may be appointed professor of English to the princesses of the royal house. *Nuper*—in former days—I too have militated; sometimes, as I now think, unjustly; but always, I vow, without personal

rancour. Which of us has not idle words to recall, flippant jokes to regret? Have you never committed an imprudence? Have you never had a dispute, and found out that you were wrong? So much the worse for you. Woe be to the man *qui croit toujours avoir raison*. His anger is not a brief madness, but a permanent mania. His rage is not a fever-fit, but a black poison inflaming him, distorting his judgment, disturbing his rest, embittering his cup, gnawing at his pleasures, causing him more cruel suffering than ever he can inflict on his enemy. *O la belle morale!* As I write it, I think about one or two little affairs of my own. There is old Dr. Squaretoso (he certainly was very rude to me, and that's the fact); there is Madame Pomposa (and certainly her ladyship's behaviour was about as cool as cool could be). Never mind, old Squaretoso: never mind, Madame Pomposa! Here is a hand. Let us be friends, as we once were, and have no more of this rancour.

I had hardly sent that last Roundabout Paper to the printer (which, I submit, was written in a pacable and not unchristian frame of mind), when Saturday came, and with it, of course, my *Saturday Review*. I remember at New York coming down to breakfast at the hotel one morning, after a criticism had appeared in the *New York Herald*, in which an

Irish writer had given me a dressing for a certain lecture on Swift. Ah! my dear little enemy of the T. R. D., what were the cudgels in *your* little *billet-doux* compared to those noble New York shillelaghs? All through the Union, the literary sons of Erin have marched *alpeen*-stock in hand, and in every city of the States they call each other and everybody else the finest names. Having come to breakfast, then, in the public room, I sit down, and see—that the nine people opposite have all got *New York Herald*s in their hands. One dear little lady, whom I knew, and who sat opposite, gave a pretty blush, and popped her paper under the tablecloth. I told her I had had my whipping already in my own private room, and begged her to continue her reading. I may have undergone agonies, you see, but every man who has been bred at an English public school comes away from a private interview with Dr. Birch with a calm, even a smiling face. And this is not impossible, when you are prepared. You screw your courage up—you go through the business. You come back and take your seat on the form, showing not the least symptom of uneasiness or of previous unpleasantries. But to be caught suddenly up, and whipped in the bosom of your family—to sit down to breakfast, and cast your innocent eye on a paper, and find, before you are aware, that the *Saturday*

Monitor or *Black Monday Instructor* has hoisted you and is laying on—that is indeed a trial. Or perhaps the family has looked at the dreadful paper beforehand, and weakly tries to hide it. “Where is the *Instructor*, or the *Monitor*?” say you. “Where is that paper?” says mamma to one of the young ladies. Lucy hasn’t it. Fanny hasn’t seen it. Emily thinks that the governess has it. At last, out it is brought, that awful paper! Papa is amazingly tickled with the article on Thomson; thinks that show up of Johnson is very lively; and now—heaven be good to us!—he has come to the critique on himself:—“Of all the rubbish which we have had from Mr. Tomkins, we do protest and vow that this last cart-load is” &c. Ah, poor Tomkins!—but most of all, ah! poor Mrs. Tomkins, and poor Emily, and Fanny, and Lucy, who have to sit by and see *paterfamilias* put to the torture!

Now, on this eventful Saturday, I did not cry, because it was not so much the Editor as the Publisher of the *Cornhill Magazine* who was brought out for a dressing; and it is wonderful how gallantly one bears the misfortunes of one’s friends. That a writer should be taken to task about his books, is fair, and he must abide the praise or the censure. But that a publisher should be criticized for his dinners, and for the conversation which did *not* take place there,—is

this tolerable press practice, legitimate joking, or honourable warfare? I have not the honour to know my next-door neighbour, but I make no doubt that he receives his friends at dinner; I see his wife and children pass constantly; I even know the carriages of some of the people who call upon him, and could tell their names. Now, suppose his servants were to tell mine what the doings are next door, who comes to dinner, what is eaten and said, and I were to publish an account of these transactions in a newspaper, I could assuredly get money for the report; but ought I to write it, and what would you think of me for doing so?

And suppose, Mr. Saturday Reviewer—you *censor morum*, you who pique yourself (and justly and honourably in the main) upon your character of gentleman, as well as of writer,—suppose, not that you yourself invent and indite absurd twaddle about gentlemen's private meetings and transactions, but pick this wretched garbage out of a New York street, and hold it up for your readers' amusement—don't you think, my friend, that you might have been better employed? Here, in my *Saturday Review*, and in an American paper subsequently sent to me, I light, astonished, on an account of the dinners of my friend and publisher, which are described as "tremendously heavy," of the conversation (which

does not take place), and of the guests assembled at the table. I am informed that the proprietor of the *Cornhill*, and the host on these occasions, is "a very good man, but totally unread;" and that on my asking him whether Dr. Johnson was dining behind the screen, he said, "God bless my soul, my dear sir, there's no person by the name of Johnson here, nor any one behind the screen," and that a roar of laughter cut him short. I am informed by the same New York correspondent that I have touched up a contributor's article; that I once said to a literary gentleman, who was proudly pointing to an anonymous article as his writing, "Ah! I thought I recognized *your hoof* in it." I am told by the same authority that the *Cornhill Magazine* "shows symptoms of being on the wane," and having sold nearly a hundred thousand copies, he (the correspondent) "should think forty thousand was now about the mark." Then the graceful writer passes on to the dinners, at which it appears the Editor of the Magazine "is the great gun, and comes out with all the geniality in his power."

Now suppose this charming intelligence is untrue? Suppose the publisher (to recall the words of my friend the Dublin actor of last month) is a gentleman to the full as well informed as those whom he invites to his table? Suppose he never made the

remark, beginning—"God bless my soul, my dear sir," &c., nor anything resembling it? Suppose nobody roared with laughing? Suppose the Editor of the *Cornhill Magazine* never "touched up" one single line of the contribution which bears "marks of his hand?" Suppose he never said to any literary gentleman, "I recognized *your hoof*" in any periodical whatever? Suppose the 40,000 subscribers, which the writer to New York "considered to be about the mark," should be between 90,000 and 100,000 (and as he will have figures, there they are)? Suppose this back-door gossip should be utterly blundering and untrue, would any one wonder? Ah! if we had only enjoyed the happiness to number this writer among the contributors to our Magazine, what a cheerfulness and easy confidence his presence would impart to our meetings! He would find that "poor Mr. Smith" had heard that recondite anecdote of Dr. Johnson behind the screen; and as for "the great gun of those banquets," with what geniality should not I "come out" if I had an amiable companion close by me, dotting down my conversation for the *New York Times*!

Attack our books, Mr. Correspondent, and welcome. They are fair subjects for just censure or praise. But woe be to you, if you allow private rancours or animosities to influence you in the dis-

charge of your public duty. In the little court where you are paid to sit as judge, as critic, you owe it to your employers, to your conscience, to the honour of your calling, to deliver just sentences; and you shall have to answer to heaven for your dealings, as surely as my Lord Chief Justice on the Bench. The dignity of letters, the honour of the literary calling, the slights put by haughty and unthinking people upon literary men,—don't we hear outcries upon these subjects raised daily? As dear Sam Johnson sits behind the screen, too proud to show his threadbare coat and patches among the more prosperous brethren of his trade, there is no want of dignity in *him*, in that homely image of labour ill-rewarded, genius as yet unrecognized, independence sturdy and uncomplaining. But Mr. Nameless, behind the publisher's screen uninvited, peering at the company and the meal, catching up scraps of the jokes, and noting down the guests' behaviour and conversation,—what a figure his is! *Allons*, Mr. Nameless! Put up your notebook; walk out of the hall; and leave gentlemen alone who would be private, and wish you no harm.

TUNBRIDGE TOYS.

I WONDER whether those little silver pencil-cases with a moveable almanack at the butt-end are still favourite implements with boys, and whether pedlars still hawk them about the country? Are there pedlars and hawkers still, or are rustics and children grown too sharp to deal with them? Those pencil-cases, as far as my memory serves me, were not of much use. The screw, upon which the moveable almanack turned, was constantly getting loose. The 1 of the table would work from its moorings, under Tuesday or Wednesday, as the case might be, and you would find, on examination, that Th. or W. was the $23\frac{1}{2}$ of the month (which was absurd on the face of the thing), and in a word your cherished pencil-case an utterly unreliable time-keeper. Nor

was this a matter of wonder. Consider the position of a pencil-case in a boy's pocket. You had hard-bake in it; marbles, kept in your purse when the money was all gone; your mother's purse, knitted so fondly and supplied with a little bit of gold, long since—prodigal little son!—scattered amongst the swine—I mean amongst brandy-balls, open tarts, three-cornered puffs, and similar abominations. You had a top and string; a knife; a piece of cobbler's wax; two or three bullets; a *Little Warbler*; and I, for my part, remember, for a considerable period, a brassbarrelled pocket-pistol (which would fire beautifully, for with it I shot off a button from Butt Major's jacket);—with all these things, and ever so many more, clinking and rattling in your pockets, and your hands, of course, keeping them in perpetual movement, how could you expect your moveable almanack not to be twisted out of its place now and again—your pencil-case to be bent—your liquorice water not to leak out of your bottle over the cobbler's wax, your bull's-eyes not to ram up the lock and barrel of your pistol, and so forth.

In the month of June, thirty-seven years ago, I bought one of those pencil-cases from a boy whom I shall call Hawker, and who was in my form. Is he dead? Is he a millionaire? Is he a bankrupt now? He was an immense screw at school, and I

believe to this day that the value of the thing for which I owed and eventually paid three-and-sixpence, was in reality not one-and-nine.

I certainly enjoyed the case at first a good deal, and amused myself with twiddling round the moveable calendar. But this pleasure wore off. The jewel, as I said, was not paid for, and Hawker, a large and violent boy, was exceedingly unpleasant as a creditor. His constant remark was, "When are you going to pay me that three-and-sixpence? What sneaks your relations must be? They come to see you. You go out to them on Saturdays and Sundays, and they never give you anything! Don't tell *me*, you little humbug!" and so forth. The truth is that my relations were respectable; but my parents were making a tour in Scotland; and my friends in London, whom I used to go and see, were most kind to me, certainly, but somehow never tipped me. That term, of May to August, 1823, passed in agonies then, in consequence of my debt to Hawker. What was the pleasure of a calendar pencil-case in comparison with the doubt and torture of mind occasioned by the sense of the debt, and the constant reproach in that fellow's scowling eyes and gloomy, coarse reminders? How was I to pay off such a debt out of sixpence a week? ludicrous! Why did not some one come to see me, and tip

me? Ah! my dear sir, if you have any little friends at school, go and see them, and do the natural thing by them. You won't miss the sovereign. You don't know what a blessing it will be to them. Don't fancy they are too old—try 'em. And they will remember you, and bless you in future days; and their gratitude shall accompany your dreary after life; and they shall meet you kindly when thanks for kindness are scant. O mercy! shall I ever forget that sovereign you gave me, Captain Bob? or the agonies of being in debt to Hawker? In that very term, a relation of mine was going to India. I actually was fetched from school in order to take leave of him. I am afraid I told Hawker of this circumstance. I own I speculated upon my friend's giving me a pound. A pound? Pooh! A relation going to India, and deeply affected at parting from his darling kinsman, might give five pounds to the dear fellow! . . . There was Hawker when I came back—of course there he was. As he looked in my scared face, his turned livid with rage. He muttered curses, terrible from the lips of so young a boy. My relation, about to cross the ocean to fill a lucrative appointment, asked me with much interest about my progress at school, heard me construe a passage of Eutropius, the pleasing Latin work on which I was then engaged; gave me a God bless you, and

sent me back to school; upon my word of honour, without so much as a half-crown! It is all very well, my dear sir, to say that boys contract habits of expecting tips from their parents' friends, that they become avaricious, and so forth. Avaricious! fudge! Boys contract habits of tart and toffee eating, which they do not carry into after life. On the contrary, I wish I *did* like 'em. What raptures of pleasure one could have now for five shillings, if one could but pick it off the pastrycook's tray! No. If you have any little friends at school, out with your half-crowns, my friend, and impart to those little ones the little fleeting joys of their age.

Well, then. At the beginning of August, 1823, Bartlemy-tide holidays came, and I was to go to my parents, who were at Tunbridge Wells. My place in the coach was taken by my tutor's servants—"Bolt-in-Tun," Fleet Street, seven o'clock in the morning, was the word. My Tutor, the Rev. Edward P——, to whom I hereby present my best compliments, had a parting interview with me: gave me my little account for my governor: the remaining part of the coach-hire; five shillings for my own expenses; and some five-and-twenty shillings on an old account which had been overpaid, and was to be restored to my family.

Away I ran and paid Hawker his three-and-six.

Ouf! what a weight it was off my mind! (He was a Norfolk boy, and used to go home from Mrs. Nelson's "Bell Inn," Aldgate—but that is not to the point.) The next morning, of course, we were an hour before the time. I and another boy shared a hackney-coach; two-and-six: porter for putting luggage on coach, threepence. I had no more money of my own left. Rasherwell, my companion, went into the "Bolt-in-Tun" coffee-room, and had a good breakfast. I couldn't; because, though I had five-and-twenty shillings of my parents' money, I had none of my own, you see.

I certainly intended to go without breakfast, and still remember how strongly I had that resolution in my mind. But there was that hour to wait. A beautiful August morning—I am very hungry. There is Rasherwell "tucking" away in the coffee-room. I pace the street, as sadly almost as if I had been coming to school, not going thence. I turn into a court by mere chance—I vow it was by mere chance—and there I see a coffee-shop with a placard in the window, *Coffee, Twopence. Round of buttered toast, Twopence.* And here am I, hungry, penniless, with five-and-twenty shillings of my parents' money in my pocket.

What would you have done? You see I had had my money, and spent it in that pencil-case affair,

The five-and-twenty shillings were a trust—by me to be handed over.

But then would my parents wish their only child to be actually without breakfast? Having this money, and being so hungry, so *very* hungry, mightn't I take ever so little? Mightn't I at home eat as much as I chose?

Well, I went into the coffee-shop, and spent fourpence. I remember the taste of the coffee and toast to this day—a peculiar, muddy, not-sweet-enough, most fragrant coffee—a rich, rancid, yet not-buttered-enough, delicious toast. The waiter had nothing. At any rate, fourpence I know was the sum I spent. And the hunger appeased, I got on the coach a guilty being.

At the last stage,—what is its name? I have forgotten in seven-and-thirty years,—there is an inn with a little green and trees before it; and by the trees there is an open carriage. It is our carriage. Yes, there are Prince and Blucher, the horses; and my parents in the carriage. Oh! how I had been counting the days until this one came! Oh! how happy had I been to see them yesterday! But there was that fourpence. All the journey down the toast had choked me, and the coffee poisoned me.

I was in such a state of remorse about the fourpence, that I forgot the maternal joy and caresses,

the tender paternal voice. I pull out the twenty-four shillings and eightpence with a trembling hand.

"Here's your money," I gasp out, "which Mr. P—— owes you, all but fourpence. I owed three-and-sixpence to Hawker out of my money for a pencil-case, and I had none left, and I took fourpence of yours, and had some coffee at a shop."

I suppose I must have been choking whilst uttering this confession.

"My dear boy," says the governor, "why didn't you go and breakfast at the hotel?"

"He must be starved," says my mother.

I had confessed; I had been a prodigal; I had been taken back to my parents' arms again. It was not a very great crime as yet, or a very long career of prodigality; but don't we know that a boy who takes a pin which is not his own, will take a thousand pounds when occasion serves, bring his parents' grey heads with sorrow to the grave, and carry his own to the gallows? Witness the career of Dick Idle, upon whom our friend Mr. Sala has been discoursing. Dick only began by playing pitch-and-toss on a tombstone: playing fair, for what we know: and even for that sin he was promptly caned by the beadle. The bamboo was ineffectual to cane that reprobate's bad courses out of him. From pitch-and-toss he proceeded to manslaughter if necessary: to

highway robbery; to Tyburn and the rope there. Ah! heaven be thanked, my parents' heads are still above the grass, and mine still out of the noose.

As I look up from my desk, I see Tunbridge Wells Common and the rocks, the strange familiar place which I remember forty years ago. Boys saunter over the green with stumps and cricket-bats. Other boys gallop by on the riding-master's hacks. I protest it is *Cramp, Riding Master*, as it used to be in the reign of George IV., and that Centaur Cramp must be at least a hundred years old. Yonder comes a footman with a bundle of novels from the library. Are they as good as *our* novels? Oh! how delightful they were! Shades of Valancour, awful ghost of Manfroni, how I shudder at your appearance! Sweet image of Thaddeus of Warsaw, how often has this almost infantile hand tried to depict you in a Polish cap and richly embroidered tights! And as for Corinthian Tom in light blue pantaloons and Hessians, and Jerry Hawthorn from the country, can all the fashion, can all the splendour of real life which these eyes have subsequently beheld, can all the wit I have heard or read in later times, compare with your fashion, with your brilliancy, with your delightful grace, and sparkling vivacious rattle?

Who knows? They *may* have kept those very books at the library still—at the well-remembered

library on the Pantiles, where they sell that delightful, useful Tunbridge ware. I will go and see. I went my way to the Pantiles, the queer little old-world Pantiles, where, a hundred years since, so much good company came to take its pleasure. Is it possible, that in the past century, gentlefolks of the first rank (as I read lately in a lecture on George II. in the *Cornhill Magazine*) assembled here and entertained each other with gaming, dancing, fiddling, and tea? There are fiddlers, harpers and trumpeters performing at this moment in a weak little old balcony, but where is the fine company? Where are the earls, duchesses, bishops, and magnificent embroidered gamesters? A half-dozen of children and their nurses are listening to the musicians; an old lady or two in a poke bonnet passes, and for the rest, I see but an uninteresting population of native tradesmen. As for the library, its window is full of pictures of burly theologians, and their works, sermons, apologues, and so forth. Can I go in and ask the young ladies at the counter for "Manfroni, or the One-Handed Monk," and "Life in London, or the Adventures of Corinthian Tom, Jeremiah Hawthorn, Esq., and their friend Bob Logic?"—absurd. I turn away abashed from the casement—from the Pantiles—no longer Pantiles, but Parade. I stroll over the Common and survey

the beautiful purple hills around, twinkling with a thousand bright villas, which have sprung up over this charming ground since first I saw it. What an admirable scene of peace and plenty! What a delicious air breathes over the heath, blows the cloud shadows across it, and murmurs through the full-clad trees! Can the world show a land fairer, richer, more cheerful? I see a portion of it when I look up from the window at which I write. But fair scene, green woods, bright terraces gleaming in sunshine, and purple clouds swollen with summer rain—nay, the very pages over which my head bends—disappear from before my eyes. They are looking backwards, back into forty years off, into a dark room, into a little house hard by on the Common here, in the Bartlemy-tide holidays. The parents have gone to town for two days: the house is all his own, his own and a grim old maid-servant's, and a little boy is seated at night in the lonely drawing-room, poring over "Manfroni, or the One-Handed Monk," so frightened that he scarcely dares to turn round.

DE JUVENTUTE.

OUR last paper of this veracious and roundabout series related to a period which can only be historical to a great number of readers of this Magazine. Four I saw at the station to-day with orange-covered books in their hands, who can but have known George IV. by books, and statues, and pictures. Elderly gentlemen were in their prime, old men in their middle age, when he reigned over us. His image remains on coins; on a picture or two hanging here and there in a Club or old-fashioned dining-room; on horseback, as at Trafalgar Square, for example, where I defy any monarch to look more uncomfortable. He turns up in sundry memoirs and histories which have been published of late days; in Mr. Massey's "History;" in the "Buckingham

and Grenville Correspondence;" and gentlemen who have accused a certain writer of disloyalty are referred to those volumes to see whether the picture drawn of George is overcharged. Charon has paddled him off; he has mingled with the crowded republic of the dead. His effigy smiles from a canvas or two. Breechless he bestrides his steed in Trafalgar Square. I believe he still wears his robes at Madame Tussaud's (Madame herself having quitted Baker Street and life, and found him she modelled t'other side the Stygian stream). On the head of a five-shilling piece we still occasionally come upon him, with St. George, the dragon-slayer, on the other side of the coin. Ah me! did this George slay many dragons? Was he a brave, heroic champion, and rescuer of virgins? Well! well! have you and I overcome all the dragons that assail *us*? come alive and victorious out of all the caverns which we have entered in life, and succoured, at risk of life and limb, all poor distressed persons in whose naked limbs the dragon Poverty is about to fasten his fangs, whom the dragon Crime is poisoning with his horrible breath, and about to crunch up and devour? O my royal liege! O my gracious prince and warrior! *You* a champion to fight that monster? Your feeble spear ever pierce that slimy paunch or plated back? See how the flames come gurgling out

of his red-hot brazen throat! What a roar! Nearer and nearer he trails, with eyes flaming like the lamps of a railroad engine. How he squeals, rushing out through the darkness of his tunnel! Now he is near. Now he is *here*. And now—what?—lance, shield, knight, feathers, horse and all? O horror, horror! Next day, round the monster's cave, there lie a few bones more. You, who wish to keep yours in your skins, be thankful that you are not called upon to go out and fight dragons. Be grateful that they don't sally out and swallow you. Keep a wise distance from their caves, lest you pay too dearly for approaching them. Remember that years passed, and whole districts were ravaged, before the warrior came who was able to cope with the devouring monster. When that knight *does* make his appearance, with all my heart let us go out and welcome him with our best songs, huzzas, and laurel wreaths, and eagerly recognize his valour and victory. But he comes only seldom. Countless knights were slain before St. George won the battle. In the battle of life are we all going to try for the honours of championship? If we can do our duty, if we can keep our place pretty honourably through the combat, let us say, *Laus Deo!* at the end of it, as the firing ceases, and the night falls over the field.

The old were middle-aged, the elderly were in

their prime, then, thirty years since, when yon royal George was still fighting the dragon. As for you, my pretty lass, with your saucy hat and golden tresses tumbled in your net, and you, my spruce young gentleman in your mandarin's cap (the young folks at the country-place where I am staying are so attired), your parents were unknown to each other, and wore short frocks and short jackets, at the date of this five-shilling piece. Only to-day I met a dog-cart crammed with children—children with moustaches and mandarin caps—children with saucy hats and hair-nets—children in short frocks and knickerbockers (surely the prettiest boy's dress that has appeared these hundred years)—children from twenty years of age to six; and father, with mother by his side, driving in front—and on father's countenance I saw that very laugh which I remember perfectly in the time when this crown-piece was coined—in *his* time, in King George's time, when we were school-boys seated on the same form. The smile was just as broad, as bright, as jolly, as I remember it in the past—unforgotten, though not seen or thought of, for how many decades of years, and quite and instantly familiar, though so long out of sight.

Any contemporary of that coin who takes it up and reads the inscription round the laurelled head,

"Georgius IV. Britanniarum Rex. Fid. Def. 1823," if he will but look steadily enough at the round, and utter the proper incantation, I dare say may conjure back his life there. Look well, my elderly friend, and tell me what you see? First, I see a Sultan, with hair, beautiful hair, and a crown of laurels round his head, and his name is Georgius Rex. Fid. Def., and so on. Now the Sultan has disappeared; and what is that I see? A boy,—a boy in a jacket. He is at a desk; he has great books before him, Latin and Greek books and dictionaries. Yes, but behind the great books, which he pretends to read, is a little one, with pictures, which he is really reading. It is—yes, I can read now—it is the "Heart of Mid Lothian," by the author of "Waverley"—or, no, it is "Life in London, or the Adventures of Corinthian Tom, Jeremiah Hawthorn, and their friend Bob Logic," by Pierce Egan; and it has pictures—oh! such funny pictures! As he reads, there comes behind the boy, a man, a dervish, in a black gown, like a woman, and a black square cap, and he has a book in each hand, and he seizes the boy who is reading the picture-book, and lays his head upon one of his books, and smacks it with the other. The boy makes faces, and so that picture disappears.

Now the boy has grown bigger. *He* has got on a black gown and cap, something like the dervish. He is at a table, with ever so many bottles on it, and fruit, and tobacco; and other young dervishes come in. They seem as if they were singing. To them enters an old moollah, he takes down their names, and orders them all to go to bed. What is this? a carriage, with four beautiful horses all galloping—a man in red is blowing a trumpet. Many young men are on the carriage—one of them is driving the horses. Surely they won't drive into that?—ah! they have all disappeared. And now I see one of the young men alone. He is walking in a street—a dark street—presently a light comes to a window. There is the shadow of a lady who passes. He stands there till the light goes out. Now he is in a room scribbling on a piece of paper, and kissing a miniature every now and then. They seem to be lines each pretty much of a length. I can read *heart, smart, dart; Mary, fairy; Cupid, stupid; true, you;* and never mind what more. Bah! it is bosh. Now see, he has got a gown on again, and a wig of white hair on his head, and he is sitting with other dervishes in a great room full of them, and on a throne in the middle is an old Sultan in scarlet, sitting before a desk, and he wears a wig too—and the young man gets up and speaks

to him. And now what is here? He is in a room with ever so many children, and the miniature hanging up. Can it be a likeness of that woman who is sitting before that copper urn, with a silver vase in her hand, from which she is pouring hot liquor into cups? Was *she* ever a fairy? She is as fat as a hippopotamus now. He is sitting on a divan by the fire. He has a paper on his knees. Read the name of the paper. It is the *Superfine Review*. It inclines to think that Mr. Dickens is not a true gentleman, that Mr. Thackeray is not a true gentleman, and that when the one is pert and the other is arch, we, the gentlemen of the *Superfine Review*, think, and think rightly, that we have some cause to be indignant. The great cause why modern humour and modern sentimentalism repel us, is that they are unwarrantably familiar. Now, Mr. Sterne, the *Superfine Reviewer* thinks, "was a true sentimentalist, because he was *above all things* a true gentleman." The flattering inference is obvious: let us be thankful for having an elegant moralist watching over us, and learn, if not too old, to imitate his high-bred politeness and catch his unobtrusive grace. If we are unwarrantably familiar, we know who is not. If we repel by pertness, we know who never does. If our language offends, we know whose is always modest. O pity! The

vision has disappeared off the silver, the images of youth and the past are vanishing away! We who have lived before railways were made, belong to another world. In how many hours could the Prince of Wales drive from Brighton to London, with a light carriage built expressly, and relays of horses longing to gallop the next stage? Do you remember Sir Somebody, the coachman of the Age, who took our half-crown so affably? It was only yesterday; but what a gulf between now and then! *Then* was the old world. Stage-coaches, more or less swift, riding-horses, pack-horses, highwaymen, knights in armour, Norman invaders, Roman legions, Druids, Ancient Britons painted blue, and so forth—all these belong to the old period. I will concede a halt in the midst of it, and allow that gunpowder and printing tended to modernize the world. But your railroad starts the new era, and we of a certain age belong to the new time and the old one. We are of the time of chivalry as well as the Black Prince or Sir Walter Manny. We are of the age of steam. We have stepped out of the old world on to "Brunel's" vast deck, and across the waters *ingens patet tellus*. Towards what new continent are we wending? to what new laws, new manners, new politics, vast new expanses of liberties unknown as yet, or only surmised? I used to know a man

who had invented a flying-machine. "Sir," he would say, "give me but five hundred pounds, and I will make it. It is so simple of construction that I tremble daily lest some other person should light upon and patent my discovery." Perhaps faith was wanting; perhaps the five hundred pounds. He is dead, and somebody else must make the flying-machine. But that will only be a step forward on the journey already begun since we quitted the old world. There it lies on the other side of yonder embankments. You young folks have never seen it; and Waterloo is to you no more than Agincourt, and George IV. than Sardanapalus. We elderly people have lived in that prærailroad world, which has passed into limbo and vanished from under us. I tell you it was firm under our feet once, and not long ago. They have raised those railroad embankments up, and shut off the old world that was behind them. Climb up that bank on which the irons are laid, and look to the other side—it is gone. There is no other side. Try and catch yesterday. Where is it? Here is a *Times* newspaper, dated Monday 26th, and this is Tuesday 27th. Suppose you deny there was such a day as yesterday?

We who lived before railways, and survive out of the ancient world, are like Father Noah and his

family out of the Ark. The children will gather round and say to us patriarchs, "Tell us, grandpapa, about the old world." And we shall mumble our old stories; and we shall drop off one by one; and there will be fewer and fewer of us, and these very old and feeble. There will be but ten prærail-roadites left: then three—then two—then one—then O! If the hippopotamus had the least sensibility (of which I cannot trace any signs either in his hide or his face), I think he would go down to the bottom of his tank, and never come up again. Does he not see that he belongs to bygone ages, and that his great hulking barrel of a body is out of place in these times? What has he in common with the brisk young life surrounding him? In the watches of the night, when the keepers are asleep, when the birds are on one leg, when even the little armadillo is quiet, and the monkeys have ceased their chatter,—he, I mean the hippopotamus, and the elephant, and the long-necked giraffe, perhaps may lay their heads together and have a colloquy about the great silent antediluvian world which they remember, where mighty monsters floundered through the ooze, crocodiles basked on the banks, and dragons darted out of the caves and waters before men were made to slay them. We who lived before railways are antediluvians—we must pass away.

We are growing scarcer every day; and old—old—very old relicts of the times when George was still fighting the Dragon.

Not long since, a company of horse-riders paid a visit to our watering-place. We went to see them, and I bethought me that young Walter Juvenis, who was in the place, might like also to witness the performance. A pantomime is not always amusing to persons who have attained a certain age; but a boy at a pantomime is always amused and amusing, and to see his pleasure is good for most hypochondriacs.

We sent to Walter's mother, requesting that he might join us, and the kind lady replied that the boy had already been at the morning performance of the equestrians, but was most eager to go in the evening likewise. And go he did; and laughed at all Mr. Merryman's remarks, though he remembered them with remarkable accuracy, and insisted upon waiting to the very end of the fun, and was only induced to retire just before its conclusion by representations that the ladies of the party would be incommoded if they were to wait and undergo the rush and trample of the crowd round about. When this fact was pointed out to him, he yielded at once, though with a heavy heart, his eyes looking longingly towards the ring as we retreated out of the booth. We were scarcely clear of the place,

when we heard "God save the Queen," played by the equestrian band, the signal that all was over. Our companion entertained us with scraps of the dialogue on our way home—precious crumbs of wit which he had brought away from that feast. He laughed over them again as we walked under the stars. He has them now, and takes them out of the pocket of his memory, and crunches a bit, and relishes it with a sentimental tenderness, too, for he is, no doubt, back at school by this time; the holidays are over; and Doctor Birch's young friends have reassembled.

Queer jokes, which caused a thousand simple mouths to grin! As the jaded Merryman uttered them to the old gentleman with the whip, some of the old folks in the audience, I dare say, indulged in reflections of their own. There was one joke—I utterly forget it—but it began with Merryman saying what he had for dinner. He had mutton for dinner, at one o'clock, after which "he had to *come to business*." And then came the point. Walter Juvenis, Esq., Rev. Doctor Birch's, Market Rodborough, if you read this, will you please send me a line, and let me know what was the joke Mr. Merryman made about having his dinner? *You* remember well enough. But do I want to know? Suppose a boy takes a favourite, long-cherished lump of cake

out of his pocket, and offers you a bite? *Merci!* The fact is, I *don't* care much about knowing that joke of Mr. Merryman's.

But whilst he was talking about his dinner, and his mutton, and his landlord, and his business, I felt a great interest about Mr. M. in private life—about his wife, lodgings, earnings, and general history, and I dare say was forming a picture of those in my mind:—wife cooking the mutton; children waiting for it; Merryman in his plain clothes, and so forth; during which contemplation the joke was uttered and laughed at, and Mr. M., resuming his professional duties, was tumbling over head and heels. Do not suppose I am going, *sicut est mos*, to indulge in moralities about buffoons, paint, motley, and mountebanking. Nay, Prime Ministers rehearse their jokes; Opposition leaders prepare and polish them; Tabernacle preachers must arrange them in their minds before they utter them. All I mean is, that I would like to know any one of these performers thoroughly, and out of his uniform: that preacher, and why in his travels this and that point struck him; wherein lies his power of pathos, humour, eloquence;—that Minister of State, and what moves him, and how his private heart is working;—I would only say that, at a certain time of life certain things cease to interest; but about *some*

things when we cease to care, what will be the use of life, sight, hearing? Poems are written, and we cease to admire. Lady Jones invites us, and we yawn; she ceases to invite us, and we are resigned. The last time I saw a ballet at the opera—oh! it is many years ago—I fell asleep in the stalls, wagging my head in insane dreams, and I hope affording amusement to the company, while the feet of five hundred nymphs were cutting flicflacs on the stage at a few paces' distance. Ah, I remember a different state of things! *Credite posteri*. To see those nymphs—gracious powers, how beautiful they were! That leering, painted, shrivelled, thin-armed, thick-ankled old thing, cutting dreary capers, coming thumping down on her board out of time—*that* an opera-dancer? Pooh! My dear Walter, the great difference between *my* time and yours, who will enter life some two or three years hence, is that, now, the dancing women and singing women are ludicrously old, out of time, and out of tune; the paint is so visible, and the dinge and wrinkles of their wretched old cotton stockings, that I am surprised how anybody can like to look at them. And as for laughing at *me* for falling asleep, I can't understand a man of sense doing otherwise. In *my* time, *à la bonne heure*. In the reign of George IV., I give you my honour, all the dancers at the opera were as

beautiful as Houris. Even in William IV.'s time, when I think of Duvernay prancing in as the Bayadère,—I say it was a vision of loveliness such as mortal eyes can't see now-a-days. How well I remember the tune to which she used to appear! Kaled used to say to the Sultan, "My lord, a troop of those dancing and singing gurls called Bayadères approaches," and, to the clash of cymbals, and the thumping of my heart, in she used to dance! There has never been anything like it—never. There never will be—I laugh to scorn old people who tell me about your Noblet, your Montessu, your Vestris, your Parisot—pshaw, the senile twaddlers! And the impudence of the young men, with their music and their dancers of to-day! I tell you the women are dreary old creatures. I tell you one air in an opera is just like another, and they send all rational creatures to sleep. Ah, Ronzi de Begnis, thou lovely one! Ah, Caradori, thou smiling angel! Ah, Malibran! Nay, I will come to modern times, and acknowledge that Lablache was a very good singer thirty years ago (though Porto was the boy for me): and then we had Ambrogetti, and Curioni, and Donzelli, a rising young singer.

But what is most certain and lamentable is the decay of stage beauty since the days of George IV. Think of Sontag! I remember her in *Otello* and the

Donna del Lago in '28. I remember being behind the scenes at the opera (where numbers of us young fellows of fashion used to go), and seeing Sontag let her hair fall down over her shoulders previous to her murder by Donzelli. Young fellows have never seen beauty like *that*, heard such a voice, seen such hair, such eyes. Don't tell *me*! A man who has been about town since the reign of George IV., ought he not to know better than you young lads who have seen nothing? The deterioration of women is lamentable; and the conceit of the young fellows more lamentable still, that they won't see this fact, but persist in thinking their time as good as ours.

Bless me! when I was a lad, the stage was covered with angels, who sang, acted, and danced. When I remember the Adelphi, and the actresses there: when I think of Miss Chester, and Miss Love, and Mrs. Serle at Sadler's Wells, and her forty glorious pupils—of the Opera and Noblet, and the exquisite young Taglioni, and Pauline Leroux, and a host more! One much-admired being of those days I confess I never cared for, and that was the chief *male* dancer—a very important personage then, with a bare neck, bare arms, a tunic, and a hat and feathers, who used to divide the applause with the ladies, and who has now sunk down a trap-door for

ever. And this frank admission ought to show that I am not your mere twaddling *laudator temporis acti*—your old fogey who can see no good except in his own time.

They say that claret is better now-a-days, and cookery much improved since the days of *my* monarch—of George IV. *Pastry Cookery* is certainly not so good. I have often eaten half-a-crown's worth (including, I trust, ginger-beer) at our school pastry-cook's, and that is a proof that the pastry must have been very good, for could I do as much now? I passed by the pastrycook's shop lately, having occasion to visit my old school. It looked a very dingy old baker's; misfortunes may have come over him—those penny tarts certainly did *not* look so nice as I remember them: but he may have grown careless as he has grown old (I should judge him to be now about ninety-six years of age), and his hand may have lost its cunning.

Not that we were not great epicures. I remember how we constantly grumbled at the quantity of the food in our master's house—which on my conscience I believe was excellent and plentiful—and how we tried once or twice to eat him out of house and home. At the pastrycook's we may have over-eaten ourselves (I have admitted half-a-crown's worth for my own part, but I don't like to mention the

real figure for fear of perverting the present generation of boys by my monstrous confession)—we may have eaten too much, I say. We did; but what then? The school apothecary was sent for: a couple of small globules at night, a trifling preparation of senna in the morning, and we had not to go to school, so that the draught was an actual pleasure.

For our amusements, besides the games in vogue, which were pretty much in old times as they are now (except cricket, *par exemple*—and I wish the present youth joy of their bowling, and suppose Armstrong and Whitworth will bowl at them with light field-pieces next), there were novels—ah! I trouble you to find such novels in the present day! O Scottish Chiefs, didn't we weep over you! O Mysteries of Udolpho, didn't I and Briggs Minor draw pictures out of you, as I have said? Efforts, feeble indeed, but still giving pleasure to us and our friends. "I say, old boy, draw us Vivaldi tortured in the Inquisition," or, "Draw us Don Quixote and the windmills, you know," amateurs would say, to boys who had a love of drawing. "Peregrine Pickle" we liked, our fathers admiring it, and telling us (the sly old boys) it was capital fun; but I think I was rather bewildered by it, though "Roderick Random" was and remains delightful. I don't remember having Sterne in the school library, no doubt because

the works of that divine were not considered decent for young people. Ah! not against thy genius, O father of Uncle Toby and Trim, would I say a word in disrespect. But I am thankful to live in times when men no longer have the temptation to write so as to call blushes on women's cheeks, and would shame to whisper wicked allusions to honest boys. Then, above all, we had WALTER SCOTT, the kindly, the generous, the pure—the companion of what countless delightful hours; the purveyor of how much happiness; the friend whom we recall as the constant benefactor of our youth! How well I remember the type and the brownish paper of the old duodecimo "Tales of My Landlord!" I have never dared to read the "Pirate," and the "Bride of Lammermoor," or "Kenilworth," from that day to this, because the finale is unhappy, and people die, and are murdered at the end. But "Ivanhoe," and "Quentin Durward!" Oh! for a half-holiday, and a quiet corner, and one of those books again! Those books, and perhaps those eyes with which we read them; and, it may be, the brains behind the eyes! It may be the tart was good; but how fresh the appetite was! If the gods would give me the desire of my heart, I should be able to write a story which boys would relish for the next few dozen of centuries. The boy-critic loves the story: grown up, he loves

the author who wrote the story. Hence the kindly tie is established between writer and reader, and lasts pretty nearly for life. I meet people now who don't care for Walter Scott, or the "Arabian Nights;" I am sorry for them, unless they in their time have found *their* romancer—their charming Scheherazade. By the way, Walter, when you are writing, tell me who is the favourite novelist in the fourth form now? Have you got anything so good and kindly as dear Miss Edgeworth's *Frank*? It used to belong to a fellow's sisters generally; but though he pretended to despise it, and said, "Oh, stuff for girls!" he read it; and I think there were one or two passages which would try my eyes now, were I to meet with the little book.

As for Thomas and Jeremiah (it is only my witty way of calling Tom and Jerry), I went to the British Museum the other day on purpose to get it; but somehow, if you will press the question so closely, on reperusal, Tom and Jerry is not so brilliant as I had supposed it to be. The pictures are just as fine as ever; and I shook hands with broad-backed Jerry Hawthorn and Corinthian Tom with delight, after many years' absence. But the style of the writing, I own, was not pleasing to me; I even thought it a little vulgar—well! well! other writers have been considered vulgar—and as a de-

scription of the sports and amusements of London in the ancient times, more curious than amusing.

But the pictures!—oh! the pictures are noble still! First, there is Jerry arriving from the country, in a green coat and leather gaiters, and being measured for a fashionable suit at Corinthian House, by Corinthian Tom's tailor. Then away for the career of pleasure and fashion. The park! delicious excitement! The theatre! The saloon!! the green-room!!! Rapturous bliss—the opera itself! and then perhaps to Temple Bar, to *knock down a Charley* there! There are Jerry and Tom, with their tights and little cocked hats, coming from the opera—very much as gentlemen in waiting on royalty are habited now. There they are at Almack's itself, amidst a crowd of high-bred personages, with the Duke of Clarence himself looking at them dancing. Now, strange change, they are in Tom Cribb's parlour, where they don't seem to be a whit less at home than in fashion's gilded halls: and now they are at Newgate, seeing the irons knocked off the malefactors' legs previous to execution. What hardened ferocity in the countenance of the desperado in yellow breeches! What compunction in the face of the gentleman in black (who, I suppose, has been forging), and who clasps his hands, and listens to the chaplain! Now we haste away to merrier scenes:

to Tattersall's (ah gracious powers! what a funny fellow that actor was who performed Dicky Green in that scene at the play!); and now we are at a private party, at which Corinthian Tom is waltzing (and very gracefully, too, as you must confess,) with Corinthian Kate, whilst Bob Logic, the Oxonian, is playing on the piano!

"After," the text says, "*the Oxonian* had played several pieces of lively music, he requested as a favour that Kate and his friend Tom would perform a waltz. Kate without any hesitation immediately stood up. Tom offered his hand to his fascinating partner, and the dance took place. The anxiety of *the Oxonian* to witness the attitudes of the elegant pair had nearly put a stop to their movements. On turning round from the pianoforte and presenting his comical *mug*, Kate could scarcely suppress a laugh." And no wonder. Now every London man is weary and *blasé*. There is an enjoyment of life in these young bucks of 1823 which contrasts strangely with our feelings of 1860. Here, for instance, is a specimen of their talk and walk. "'If,' says LOGIC—'if *enjoyment* is your *motto*, you may make the most of an evening at Vauxhall, more than at any other place in the metropolis. It is all free and easy. Stay as long as you like, and depart when you think proper.'—'Your description is so flattering,' replied

JERRY, 'that I do not care how soon the time arrives for us to start.' LOGIC proposed a '*bit of a stroll*' in order to get rid of an hour or two, which was immediately accepted by Tom and Jerry. A *turn* or two in Bond Street, a *stroll* through Piccadilly, a *look in* at TATTERSALL'S, a *ramble* through Pall Mall, and a *strut* on the Corinthian path, fully occupied the time of our heroes until the hour for dinner arrived, when a few glasses of TOM'S rich wines soon put them on the *qui vive*. VAUXHALL was then the object in view, and the TRIO started, bent upon enjoying the pleasures which this place so amply affords."

How nobly those inverted commas, those italics, those capitals, bring out the writer's wit and relieve the eye! They are as good as jokes, though you mayn't quite perceive the point. Mark the varieties of lounge in which the young men indulge—now *a stroll*, then *a look in*, then *a ramble*, and presently *a strut*. When George, Prince of Wales, was twenty, I have read in an old Magazine, "the Prince's lounge" was a peculiar manner of walking which the young bucks imitated. At Windsor George III. had *a cat's path*—a sly early walk which the good old king took in the gray morning before his household was astir. What was the Corinthian path here recorded? Does any antiquary know? And what were the rich

wines which our friends took, and which enabled them to enjoy Vauxhall? Vauxhall is gone, but the wines which could occasion such a delightful perversion of the intellect as to enable it to enjoy ample pleasures there, what were they?

So the game of life proceeds, until Jerry Hawthorn, the rustic, is fairly knocked up by all this excitement and is forced to go home, and to get into the coach at the "White Horse Cellar," he being one of six inside; whilst his friends shake him by the hand; whilst the sailor mounts on the roof; whilst the Jews hang round with oranges, knives, and sealing-wax: whilst the guard is closing the door. Where are they now, those sealing-wax vendors? where are the guards? where are the jolly teams? where are the coaches? and where the youth that climbed inside and out of them; that heard the merry horn which sounds no more; that saw the sun rise over Stonehenge; that rubbed away the bitter tears at night after parting as the coach sped on the journey to school and London; that looked out with beating heart as the milestones flew by, for the welcome corner where began home and holidays?

It is night now: and here is home. Gathered under the quiet roof elders and children lie alike at rest. In the midst of a great peace and calm, the stars look out from the heavens. The silence

is peopled with the past; sorrowful remorse for sins and short-comings—memories of passionate joys and griefs rise out of their graves, both now alike calm and sad. Eyes, as I shut mine, look at me, that have long ceased to shine. The town and the fair landscape sleep under the starlight, wreathed in the autumn mists. Twinkling among the houses a light keeps watch here and there, in what may be a sick chamber or two. The clock tolls sweetly in the silent air. Here is night and rest. An awful sense of thanks makes the heart swell, and the head bow, as I pass to my room through the sleeping house, and feel as though a hushed blessing were upon it.

ON A JOKE I ONCE HEARD FROM THE LATE THOMAS HOOD.

THE good-natured reader who has perused some of these rambling papers has long since seen (if to see has been worth his trouble) that the writer belongs to the old-fashioned classes of this world, loves to remember very much more than to prophesy, and though he can't help being carried onward, and downward, perhaps, on the hill of life, the swift milestones marking their forties, fifties—how many tens or lustres shall we say?—he sits under Time, the white-wigged charioteer, with his back to the horses, and his face to the past, looking at the receding landscape and the hills fading into the gray distance. Ah me! those gray, distant hills were green once, and *here*, and covered with smiling

people! As we came *up* the hill there was difficulty, and here and there a hard pull to be sure, but strength, and spirits, and all sorts of cheery incident and companionship on the road; there were the tough struggles (by heaven's merciful will) overcome, the pauses, the faintings, the weakness, the lost way, perhaps, the bitter weather, the dreadful partings, the lonely night, the passionate grief—towards these I turn my thoughts as I sit and think in my hobby-coach under Time, the silver-wigged charioteer. The young folks in the same carriage meanwhile are looking forwards. Nothing escapes their keen eyes—not a flower at the side of a cottage garden, nor a bunch of rosy-faced children at the gate: the land scape is all bright, the air brisk and jolly, the town yonder looks beautiful, and do you think they have learned to be difficult about the dishes at the inn?

Now, suppose Paterfamilias on his journey with his wife and children in the sociable, and he passes an ordinary brick house on the road with an ordinary little garden in the front, we will say, and quite an ordinary knocker to the door, and as many sashed windows as you please, quite common and square, and tiles, windows, chimney-pots, quite like others; or suppose, in driving over such and such a common, he sees an ordinary tree, and an ordinary

donkey browsing under it, if you like—wife and daughter look at these objects without the slightest particle of curiosity or interest. What is a brass knocker to them but a lion's head, or what not? and a thorn-tree with a pool beside it, but a pool in which a thorn and a jackass are reflected?

But you remember how once upon a time your heart used to beat, as you beat on that brass knocker, and whose eyes looked from the window above. You remember how by that thorn-tree and pool, where the geese were performing a prodigious evening concert, there might be seen, at a certain hour, somebody in a certain cloak and bonnet, who happened to be coming from a village yonder, and whose image has flickered in that pool. In that pool, near the thorn? Yes, in that goose-pool, never mind how long ago, when there were reflected the images of the geese—and two geese more. Here, at least, an oldster may have the advantage of his young fellow-travellers, and so Putney Heath or the New Road may be invested with a halo of brightness invisible to them, because it only beams out of his own soul.

I have been reading the "Memorials of Hood" by his children,* and wonder whether the book will

* *Memorials of Thomas Hood.* Moxon, 1860. 2 vols.

have the same interest for others and for younger people, as for persons of my own age and calling. Books of travel to any country become interesting to us who have been there. Men revisit the old school, though hateful to them, with ever so much kindliness and sentimental affection. There was the tree under which the bully licked you: here the ground where you had to fag out on holidays, and so forth. In a word, my dear sir, *You* are the most interesting subject to yourself, of any that can occupy your worship's thoughts. I have no doubt, a Crimean soldier, reading a history of that siege, and how Jones and the gallant 99th were ordered to charge or what not, thinks, "Ah, yes, we of the 100th were placed so and so, I perfectly remember." So with this memorial of poor Hood, it may have, no doubt, a greater interest for me than for others, for I was fighting, so to speak, in a different part of the field, and engaged, a young subaltern, in the Battle of Life, in which Hood fell, young still, and covered with glory. "The Bridge of Sighs" was his Corunna, his heights of Abraham—sickly, weak, wounded, he fell in the full blaze and fame of that great victory.

What manner of man was the genius who penned that famous song? What like was Wolfe, who climbed and conquered on those famous heights of

Abraham? We all want to know details regarding men who have achieved famous feats, whether of war, or wit, or eloquence, or endurance, or knowledge. His one or two happy and heroic actions take a man's name and memory out of the crowd of names and memories. Henceforth he stands eminent. We scan him: we want to know all about him; we walk round and examine him, are curious, perhaps, and think are we not as strong and tall and capable as yonder champion; were we not bred as well, and could we not endure the winter's cold as well as he? Or we look up with all our eyes of admiration; will find no fault in our hero: declare his beauty and proportions perfect; his critics envious detractors, and so forth. Yesterday, before he performed his feat, he was nobody. Who cared about his birth-place, his parentage, or the colour of his hair? To-day, by some single achievement, or by a series of great actions to which his genius accustoms us, he is famous, and antiquarians are busy finding out under what schoolmaster's ferule he was educated, where his grandmother was vaccinated, and so forth. If half-a-dozen washing-bills of Goldsmith's were to be found to-morrow, would they not inspire a general interest, and be printed in a hundred papers? I lighted upon Oliver, not very long since, in an old Town and Country Magazine, at the Pantheon mas-

querade "in an old English habit." Straightway my imagination ran out to meet him, to look at him, to follow him about. I forgot the names of scores of fine gentlemen of the past age, who were mentioned besides. We want to see this man who has amused and charmed us; who has been our friend, and given us hours of pleasant companionship and kindly thought. I protest when I came, in the midst of those names of people of fashion, and beaux, and demireps, upon those names "*Sir J. R-yn-lds, in a domino; Mr. Cr-d-ck and Dr. G-ldsm-th, in two old English dresses,*" I had, so to speak, my heart in my mouth. What, *you* here, my dear Sir Joshua? Ah, what an honour and privilege it is to see you! This is Mr. Goldsmith? And very much, sir, the ruff and the slashed doublet become you! O Doctor! what a pleasure I had and have in reading the *Animated Nature*. How *did* you learn the secret of writing the decasyllable line, and whence that sweet wailing note of tenderness that accompanies your song? Was Beau Tibbs a real man, and will you do me the honour of allowing me to sit at your table at supper? Don't you think you know how he would have talked? Would you not have liked to hear him prattle over the champagne?

Now, Hood is passed away—passed off the earth as much as Goldsmith or Horace. The times in

which he lived, and in which very many of us lived and were young, are changing or changed. I saw Hood once as a young man, at a dinner which seems almost as ghostly now as that masquerade at the Pantheon (1772), of which we were speaking anon. It was at a dinner of the Literary Fund, in that vast apartment which is hung round with the portraits of very large Royal Freemasons, now unsubstantial ghosts. There at the end of the room was Hood. Some publishers, I think, were our companions. I quite remember his pale face; he was thin and deaf, and very silent; he scarcely opened his lips during the dinner, and he made one pun. Some gentleman missed his snuff-box, and Hood said,——(the Freemasons' Tavern was kept, you must remember, by Mr. CUFF in those days, not by its present proprietors). Well, the box being lost, and asked for, and CUFF (remember that name) being the name of the landlord, Hood opened his silent jaws and said * * * * * Shall I tell you what he said? It was not a very good pun, which the great punster then made. Choose your favourite pun out of "Whims and Oddities," and fancy that was the joke which he contributed to the hilarity of our little table.

Where those asterisks are drawn on the page, you must know, a pause occurred, during which I

was engaged with "Hood's Own," having been referred to the book by this life of the author which I have just been reading. I am not going to dissert on Hood's humour; I am not a fair judge. Have I not said elsewhere that there are one or two wonderfully old gentlemen still alive who used to give me tips when I was a boy? I can't be a fair critic about them. I always think of that sovereign, that rapture of raspberry-tarts, which made my young days happy. Those old sovereign-contributors may tell stories ever so old, and I shall laugh; they may commit murder, and I shall believe it was justifiable homicide. There is my friend Baggs, who goes about abusing me, and of course our dear mutual friends tell me. Abuse away, *mon bon*! You were so kind to me when I wanted kindness, that you may take the change out of that gold now, and say I am a cannibal and negro, if you will. Ha, Baggs! Dost thou wince as thou readest this line? Does guilty conscience throbbing at thy breast tell thee of whom the fable is narrated? Puff out thy wrath, and, when it has ceased to blow, my Baggs shall be to me as the Baggs of old—the generous, the gentle, the friendly.

No, on second thoughts, I am determined I will not repeat that joke which I heard Hood make. He says he wrote these jokes with such ease that he

sent manuscripts to the publishers faster than they could acknowledge the receipt thereof. I won't say that they were all good jokes, or that to read a great book full of them is a work at present altogether jocular. Writing to a friend respecting some memoir of him which had been published, Hood says, "You will judge how well the author knows me, when he says my mind is rather serious than comic." At the time when he wrote these words, he evidently undervalued his own serious power, and thought that in punning and broad-grinning lay his chief strength. Is not there something touching in that simplicity and humility of faith? "To make laugh is my calling," says he; "I must jump, I must grin, I must tumble, I must turn language head over heels, and leap through grammar;" and he goes to his work humbly and courageously, and what he has to do that does he with all his might, through sickness, through sorrow, through exile, poverty, fever, depression—there he is, always ready to his work, and with a jewel of genius in his pocket! Why, when he laid down his puns and pranks, put the motley off, and spoke out of his heart, all England and America listened with tears and wonder! Other men have delusions of conceit, and fancy themselves greater than they are, and that the world slights them. Have we not heard how Liston always thought

he ought to play Hamlet? Here is a man with a power to touch the heart almost unequalled, and he passes days and years in writing, "Young Ben he was a nice young man," and so forth. To say truth, I have been reading in a book of "Hood's Own" until I am perfectly angry. "You great man, you good man, you true genius and poet," I cry out, as I turn page after page. "Do, do, make no more of these jokes, but be yourself, and take your station."

When Hood was on his deathbed, Sir Robert Peel, who only knew of his illness, not of his imminent danger, wrote to him a noble and touching letter, announcing that a pension was conferred on him:

"I am more than repaid," writes Peel, "by the personal satisfaction which I have had in doing that for which you return me warm and characteristic acknowledgments.

"You perhaps think that you are known to one with such multifarious occupations as myself, merely by general reputation as an author; but I assure you that there can be little, which you have written and acknowledged, which I have not read; and that there are few who can appreciate and admire more than myself, the good sense and good feeling which have taught you to infuse so much fun and merriment into writings correcting folly and exposing absurdities, and yet never trespassing beyond those limits within which wit and facetiousness are not very often con-

finer. You may write on with the consciousness of independence, as free and unfettered, as if no communication had ever passed between us. I am not conferring a private obligation upon you, but am fulfilling the intentions of the legislature, which has placed at the disposal of the Crown a certain sum (miserable, indeed, in amount) to be applied to the recognition of public claims on the bounty of the Crown. If you will review the names of those whose claims have been admitted on account of their literary or scientific eminence, you will find an ample confirmation of the truth of my statement.

"One return, indeed, I shall ask of you,—that you will give me the opportunity of making your personal acquaintance."

And Hood, writing to a friend, enclosing a copy of Peel's letter, says, "Sir R. Peel came from Burleigh on Tuesday night, and went down to Brighton on Saturday. If he had written by post, I should not have had it till to-day. So he sent his servant with the enclosed on *Saturday night*; another mark of considerate attention." He is frightfully unwell, he continues: his wife says he looks *quite green*; but ill as he is, poor fellow, "his well is not dry. He has pumped out a sheet of Christmas fun, is drawing some cuts, and shall write a sheet more of his novel."

Oh, sad, marvellous picture of courage, of honesty, of patient endurance, of duty struggling against pain! How noble Peel's figure is standing

by that sick bed! how generous his words, how dignified and sincere his compassion! And the poor dying man, with a heart full of natural gratitude towards his noble benefactor, must turn to him and say—"If it be well to be remembered by a Minister, it is better still not to be forgotten by him in a 'hurly Burleigh!'" Can you laugh? Is not the joke horribly pathetic from the poor dying lips? As dying Robin Hood must fire a last shot with his bow—as one reads of Catholics on their death-beds putting on a Capuchin dress to go out of the world—here is poor Hood at his last hour putting on his ghastly motley, and uttering one joke more.

He dies, however, in dearest love and peace with his children, wife, friends; to the former especially his whole life had been devoted, and every day showed his fidelity, simplicity, and affection. In going through the record of his most pure, modest, honourable life, and living along with him, you come to trust him thoroughly, and feel that here is a most loyal, affectionate, and upright soul, with whom you have been brought into communion. Can we say as much of the lives of all men of letters? Here is one at least without guile, without pretension, without scheming, of a pure life, to his family and little modest circle of friends tenderly devoted.

And what a hard work, and what a slender reward! In the little domestic details with which the book abounds, what a simple life is shown to us! The most simple little pleasures and amusements delight and occupy him. You have revels on shrimps; the good wife making the pie; details about the maid, and criticisms on her conduct; wonderful tricks played with the plum-pudding—all the pleasures centring round the little humble home. One of the first men of his time, he is appointed editor of a Magazine at a salary of 300*l.* per annum, signs himself exultingly “Ed. N. M. M.,” and the family rejoice over the income as over a fortune. He goes to a Greenwich dinner—what a feast and a rejoicing afterwards!—

“Well, we drank ‘the Boz’ with a delectable clatter, which drew from him a good warm-hearted speech. . . . He looked very well, and had a younger brother along with him. . . . Then we had songs. Barham chanted a Robin Hood ballad, and Cruikshank sang a burlesque ballad of Lord H——; and somebody, unknown to me, gave a capital imitation of a French showman. Then we toasted Mrs. Boz, and the Chairman, and Vice, and the Traditional Priest sang the ‘Deep deep sea,’ in his deep deep voice; and then we drank to Proctor, who wrote the said song; also Sir J. Wilson’s good health, and Cruikshank’s, and Ainsworth’s: and a Manchester friend of the latter sang a Manchester ditty, so full of trading stuff, that it really seemed to have been not composed,

but manufactured. Jerdan, as Jerdanish as usual on such occasions—you know how paradoxically he is *quite at home in dining out*. As to myself, I had to make my *second maiden speech*, for Mr. Monekton Milnes proposed my health in terms my modesty might allow me to repeat to *you*, but my memory won't. However, I ascribed the toast to my notoriously bad health, and assured them that their wishes had already improved it—that I felt a brisker circulation—a more genial warmth about the heart, and explained that a certain trembling of my hand was not from palsy, or my old ague, but an inclination in my hand to shake itself with every one present. Whereupon I had to go through the friendly ceremony with as many of the company as were within reach, besides a few more who came express from the other end of the table. *Very gratifying*, wasn't it? Though I cannot go quite so far as Jane, who wants me to have that hand chopped off, bottled, and preserved in spirits. She was sitting up for me, very anxiously, as usual when I go out, because I am so domestic and steady, and was down at the door before I could ring at the gate, to which Boz kindly sent me in his own carriage. Poor girl! what *would* she do if she had a wild husband instead of a tame one?"

And the poor anxious wife is sitting up, and fondles the hand which has been shaken by so many illustrious men! The little feast dates back only eighteen years, and yet somehow it seems as distant as a dinner at Mr. Thrale's, or a meeting at Will's.

Poor little gleam of sunshine! very little good cheer enlivens that sad simple life. We have the

triumph of the Magazine: then a new Magazine projected and produced: then illness and the last scene, and the kind Peel by the dying man's bedside speaking noble words of respect and sympathy, and soothing the last throbs of the tender honest heart.

I like, I say, Hood's life even better than his books, and I wish, with all my heart, *Monsieur et cher confrère*, the same could be said for both of us, when the inkstream of our life hath ceased to run. Yes: if I drop first, dear Baggs, I trust you may find reason to modify some of the unfavourable views of my character, which you are freely imparting to our mutual friends. What ought to be the literary man's point of honour now-a-days? Suppose, friendly reader, you are one of the craft, what legacy would you like to leave to your children? First of all (and by heaven's gracious help) you would pray and strive to give them such an endowment of love, as should last certainly for all their lives, and perhaps be transmitted to their children. You would (by the same aid and blessing) keep your honour pure, and transmit a name unstained to those who have a right to bear it. You would,—though this faculty of giving is one of the easiest of the literary man's qualities—you would, out of your earnings, small or great, be able to

help a poor brother in need, to dress his wounds, and, if it were but twopence, to give him succour. Is the money which the noble Macaulay gave to the poor lost to his family? God forbid. To the loving hearts of his kindred is it not rather the most precious part of their inheritance? It was invested in love and righteous doing, and it bears interest in heaven. You will, if letters be your vocation, find saving harder than giving and spending. To save be your endeavour, too, against the night's coming when no man may work; when the arm is weary with the long day's labour; when the brain perhaps grows dark; when the old, who can labour no more, want warmth and rest, and the young ones call for supper.

I copied a little galley-slave from a quaint old silver spoon which we purchased in a curiosity-shop at the Hague. It is one of the gift spoons so common in Holland, and which have multiplied so astonishingly of late years at our dealers' in old silverware. Along the stem of the spoon are written the words: "Anno 1609, *Bin ick aldus ghekledt gheghaen*"—"In the year 1609

I went thus clad." The good Dutchman was released from his Algerine captivity (I imagine his figure looks like that of a slave amongst the Moors), and in his thank-offering to some godchild at home, he thus piously records his escape.

Was not poor Cervantes also a captive amongst the Moors? Did not Fielding, and Goldsmith, and Smollett, too, die at the chain as well as poor Hood? Think of Fielding going on board his wretched ship in the Thames, with scarce a hand to bid him farewell; of brave Tobias Smollett, and his life, how hard, and how poorly rewarded; of Goldsmith, and the physician whispering, "Have you something on your mind?" and the wild dying eyes answering, "Yes." Notice how Boswell speaks of Goldsmith, and the splendid contempt with which he regards him. Read Hawkins on Fielding, and the scorn with which Dandy Walpole and Bishop Hurd speak of him. Galley-slaves doomed to tug the oar and wear the chain, whilst my lords and dandies take their pleasure, and hear fine music and disport with fine ladies in the cabin!

But stay. Was there any cause for this scorn? Had some of these great men weaknesses which gave inferiors advantage over them? Men of letters cannot lay their hands on their hearts, and say, "No, the fault was fortune's, and the indifferent

world's, not Goldsmith's nor Fielding's." There was no reason why Oliver should always be thriftless; why Fielding and Steele should sponge upon their friends; why Sterne should make love to his neighbours' wives. Swift, for a long time, was as poor as any wag that ever laughed: but he owed no penny to his neighbours: Addison, when he wore his most threadbare coat, could hold his head up, and maintain his dignity: and, I dare vouch, neither of those gentlemen, when they were ever so poor, asked any man alive to pity their condition, and have a regard to the weaknesses incidental to the literary profession. Galley-slave, forsooth! If you are sent to prison for some error for which the law awards that sort of laborious seclusion, so much the more shame for you. If you are chained to the oar a prisoner of war, like Cervantes, you have the pain, but not the shame, and the friendly compassion of mankind to reward you. Galley-slaves, indeed! What man has not his oar to pull? There is that wonderful old stroke-oar in the Queen's galley. How many years has he pulled? Day and night, in rough water or smooth, with what invincible vigour and surprising gaiety he plies his arms. There is in the same *Galère Capitaine*, that well-known, trim figure, the bow-oar; how he tugs, and with what a will! How both of them have

been abused in their time! Take the Lawyer's galley, and that dauntless octogenarian in command; when has *he* ever complained or repined about his slavery? There is the Priest's galley—black and lawn sails—do any mariners out of Thames work harder? When lawyer, and statesman, and divine, and writer are snug in bed, there is a ring at the poor Doctor's bell. Forth he must go, in rheumatism or snow; a galley-slave bearing his galley-pots to quench the flames of fever, to succour mothers and young children in their hour of peril, and, as gently and soothingly as may be, to carry the hopeless patient over to the silent shore. And have we not just read of the actions of the Queen's galleys and their brave crews in the Chinese waters? Men not more worthy of human renown and honour to-day in their victory, than last year in their glorious hour of disaster. So with stout hearts may we ply the oar, messmates all, till the voyage is over, and the Harbour of Rest is found.

ROUND ABOUT THE CHRISTMAS TREE.

THE kindly Christmas tree, from which I trust every gentle reader has pulled a bonbon or two, is yet all aflame whilst I am writing, and sparkles with the sweet fruits of its season. You young ladies, may you have plucked pretty giftlings from it; and out of the cracker sugar-plum which you have split with the captain or the sweet young curate may you have read one of those delicious conundrums which the confectioners introduce into the sweetmeats, and which apply to the cunning passion of love. Those riddles are to be read at *your* age, when I dare say they are amusing. As for Dolly, Merry, and Bell, who are standing at the tree, they don't care about the love-riddle part, but understand the sweet-almond portion very well. They are four, five, six years

old. Patience, little people! A dozen merry Christmases more, and you will be reading those wonderful love-conundrums, too. As for us elderly folks, we watch the babies at their sport, and the young people pulling at the branches: and instead of finding bonbons or sweeties in the packets which *we* pluck off the boughs, we find enclosed Mr. Carnifex's review of the quarter's meat; Mr. Sartor's compliments, and little statement for self and the young gentlemen; and Madame de Sainte-Crinoline's respects to the young ladies, who encloses her account, and will send on Saturday, please; or we stretch our hand out to the educational branch of the Christmas tree, and there find a lively and amusing article from the Rev. Henry Holyshade, containing our dear Tommy's exceedingly moderate account for the last term's school expenses.

The tree yet sparkles, I say. I am writing on the day before Twelfth Day, if you must know; but already ever so many of the fruits have been pulled, and the Christmas lights have gone out. Bobby Miseltow, who has been staying with us for a week (and who has been sleeping mysteriously in the bath-room), comes to say he is going away to spend the rest of the holidays with his grandmother—and I brush away the manly tear of regret as I part with the dear child. “Well, Bob, good-by, since you *will*

go. Compliments to grandmamma. Thank her for the turkey. Here's——" (*A slight pecuniary transaction takes place at this juncture, and Bob nods and winks, and puts his hand in his waistcoat pocket.*) "You have had a pleasant week?"

BOB.—"Haven't I!" (*And exit, anxious to know the amount of the coin which has just changed hands.*)

He is gone, and as the dear boy vanishes through the door (behind which I see him perfectly), I too cast up a little account of our past Christmas week. When Bob's holidays are over, and the printer has sent me back this manuscript, I know Christmas will be an old story. All the fruit will be off the Christmas tree then; the crackers will have cracked off; the almonds will have been crunched; and the sweet-bitter riddles will have been read; the lights will have perished off the dark green boughs; the toys growing on them will have been distributed, fought for, cherished, neglected, broken. Ferdinand and Fidelia will each keep out of it (be still, my gushing heart!) the remembrance of a riddle read together, of a double-almond munched together, and the moiety of an exploded cracker. . . . The maids, I say, will have taken down all that holly stuff and nonsense about the clocks, lamps, and looking-glasses, the dear boys will be back at school, fondly thinking of the pantomime-

fairies whom they have seen; whose gaudy gossamer wings are battered by this time; and whose pink cotton (or silk is it?) lower extremities are all dingy and dusty. Yet but a few days, Bob, and flakes of paint will have cracked off the fairy flower-bowers, and the revolving temples of adamantine lustre will be as shabby as the city of Pekin. When you read this, will Clown still be going on lolling his tongue out of his mouth, and saying, "How are you to-morrow?" To-morrow, indeed! He must be almost ashamed of himself (if that cheek is still capable of the blush of shame) for asking the absurd question. To-morrow, indeed! To-morrow the diffugient snows will give place to Spring; the snowdrops will lift their heads; Ladyday may be expected, and the pecuniary duties peculiar to that feast; in place of bonbons, trees will have an eruption of light green knobs; the whitebait season will bloom . . . as if one need go on describing these vernal phenomena, when Christmas is still here, though ending, and the subject of my discourse!

We have all admired the illustrated papers, and noted how boisterously jolly they become at Christmas time. What wassail-bowls, robin-redbreasts, waits, snow landscapes, bursts of Christmas song! And then to think that these festivities are prepared months before—that these Christmas pieces are

prophetic! How kind of artists and poets to devise the festivities beforehand, and serve them pat at the proper time! We ought to be grateful to them, as to the cook who gets up at midnight and sets the pudding a-boiling, which is to feast us at six o'clock. I often think with gratitude of the famous Mr. Nelson Lee—the author of I don't know how many hundred glorious pantomimes—walking by the summer wave at Margate, or Brighton perhaps, revolving in his mind the idea of some new gorgeous spectacle of faëry, which the winter shall see complete. He is like cook at midnight (*si parva licet*). He watches and thinks. He pounds the sparkling sugar of benevolence, the plums of fancy, the sweetmeats of fun, the figs of—well, the figs of fairy fiction, let us say, and pops the whole in the seething cauldron of imagination, and at due season serves up THE PANTOMIME.

Very few men in the course of nature can expect to see *all* the pantomimes in one season, but I hope to the end of my life I shall never forego reading about them in that delicious sheet of *The Times* which appears on the morning after Boxing-day. Perhaps reading is even better than seeing. The best way, I think, is to say you are ill, lie in bed, and have the paper for two hours, reading all the way down from Drury Lane to the Britannia at

Hoxton. Bob and I went to two pantomimes. One was at the Theatre of Fancy, and the other at the Fairy Opera, and I don't know which we liked the best.

At the Fancy, we saw "Harlequin Hamlet, or Daddy's Ghost and Nunky's Pison," which is all very well—but, gentlemen, if you don't respect Shakspeare, to whom will you be civil? The palace and ramparts of Elsinore by moon and snowlight is one of Louthembourg's finest efforts. The banqueting hall of the palace is illuminated: the peaks and gables glitter with the snow: the sentinels march blowing their fingers with the cold—the freezing of the nose of one of them is very neatly and dexterously arranged: the snow-storm rises: the winds howl awfully along the battlements: the waves come curling, leaping, foaming to shore. Hamlet's umbrella is whirled away in the storm. He and his two friends stamp on each other's toes to keep them warm. The storm-spirits rise in the air, and are whirled howling round the palace and the rocks. My eyes! what tiles and chimney-pots fly hurtling through the air! As the storm reaches its height (here the wind instruments come in with prodigious effect, and I compliment Mr. Brumby and the violoncellos)—as the snowstorm rises, (queek, queek, queek, go the fiddles, and then thrumpty thrump

comes a pizzicato movement in Bob Major, which sends a shiver into your very boot-soles), the thunderclouds deepen (bong, bong, bong, from the violoncellos.) The forked lightning quivers through the clouds in a zig-zag scream of violins—and look, look, look! as the frothing, roaring waves come rushing up the battlements, and over the reeling parapet, each hissing wave becomes a ghost, sends the gun-carriages rolling over the platform, and plunges howling into the water again.

Hamlet's mother comes on to the battlements to look for her son. The storm whips her umbrella out of her hands, and she retires screaming in patters.

The cabs on the stand in the great market-place at Elsinore are seen to drive off, and several people are drowned. The gaslamps along the street are wrenched from their foundations, and shoot through the troubled air. Whist, rush, hiss! how the rain roars and pours! The darkness becomes awful, always deepened by the power of the music—and see—in the midst of a rush, and whirl, and scream of spirits of air and wave—what is that ghastly figure moving hither? It becomes bigger, bigger, as it advances down the platform—more ghastly, more horrible, enormous! It is as tall as the whole stage. It seems to be advancing on the stalls and pit, and

the whole house screams with terror, as the GHOST OF THE LATE HAMLET comes in, and begins to speak. Several people faint, and the light-fingered gentry pick pockets furiously in the darkness.

In the pitchy darkness, this awful figure throwing his eyes about, the gas in the boxes shuddering out of sight, and the wind-instruments bugling the most horrible wails, the boldest spectator must have felt frightened. But hark! what is that silver shimmer of the fiddles! Is it—can it be—the gray dawn peeping in the stormy east? The ghost's eyes look blankly towards it, and roll a ghastly agony. Quicker, quicker ply the violins of Phœbus Apollo. Redder, redder grow the orient clouds. Cockadoodledoo! crows that great cock which hast just come out on the roof of the palace. And now the round sun himself pops up from behind the waves of night. Where is the ghost? He is gone! Purple shadows of morn "slant o'er the snowy sward," the city wakes up in life and sunshine, and we confess we are very much relieved at the disappearance of the ghost. We don't like those dark scenes in pantomimes.

After the usual business, that Ophelia should be turned into Columbine was to be expected; but I confess I was a little shocked when Hamlet's mother became Pantaloon, and was instantly knocked down

by Clown Claudius. Grimaldi is getting a little old now, but for real humour there are few clowns like him. Mr. Shuter, as the gravedigger, was chaste and comic, as he always is, and the scene-painters surpassed themselves.

“Harlequin Conqueror and the Field of Hastings,” at the other house, is very pleasant too. The irascible William is acted with great vigour by Snoxall, and the battle of Hastings is a good piece of burlesque. Some trifling liberties are taken with history, but what liberties will not the merry genius of pantomime permit himself? At the battle of Hastings, William is on the point of being defeated by the Sussex volunteers, very elegantly led by the always pretty Miss Waddy (as Haco Sharpshooter), when a shot from the Normans kills Harold. The fairy Edith hereupon comes forward, and finds his body, which straightway leaps up a live harlequin, whilst the Conqueror makes an excellent clown, and the Archbishop of Bayeux a diverting pantaloon, &c. &c. &c.

Perhaps these are not the pantomimes we really saw; but one description will do as well as another. The plots, you see, are a little intricate and difficult to understand in pantomimes; and I may have mixed up one with another. That I was at the theatre on Boxing-night is certain—but the pit was so full that I could only see fairy legs glittering in the

distance, as I stood at the door. And if I was badly off, I think there was a young gentleman behind me worse off still. I own that he has good reason (though others have not) to speak ill of me behind my back, and hereby beg his pardon.

Likewise to the gentleman who picked up a party in Piccadilly, who had slipped and fallen in the snow, and was there on his back, uttering energetic expressions; that party begs to offer thanks, and compliments of the season.

Bob's behaviour on New Year's day, I can assure Dr. Holyshade, was highly creditable to the boy. He had expressed a determination to partake of every dish which was put on the table; but after soup, fish, roast-beef, and roast-goose, he retired from active business until the pudding and mince-pies made their appearance, of which he partook liberally, but not too freely. And he greatly advanced in my good opinion by praising the punch, which was of my own manufacture, and which some gentlemen present (Mr. O'M—g—n, amongst others) pronounced to be too weak. Too weak! A bottle of rum, a bottle of Madeira, half a bottle of brandy, and two bottles and a half of water—*can* this mixture be said to be too weak for any mortal? Our young friend amused the company during the evening, by exhibiting a two-shilling magic-lantern, which he

had purchased, and likewise by singing "Sally, come up!" a quaint, but rather monotonous melody, which I am told is sung by the poor negro on the banks of the broad Mississippi.

What other enjoyments did we proffer for the child's amusement during the Christmas week? A great philosopher was giving a lecture to young folks at the British Institution. But when this diversion was proposed to our young friend Bob, he said, "Lecture? No, thank you. Not as I know on," and made sarcastic signals on his nose. Perhaps he is of Dr. Johnson's opinion about lectures: "Lectures, sir! what man would go to hear that imperfectly at a lecture, which he can read at leisure in a book?" *I* never went, of my own choice, to a lecture; that I can vow. As for sermons, they are different; I delight in them, and they cannot, of course, be too long.

Well, we partook of yet other Christmas delights besides pantomime, pudding, and pie. One glorious, one delightful, one most unlucky and pleasant day, we drove in a brougham, with a famous horse, which carried us more quickly and briskly than any of your vulgar railways, over Battersea Bridge, on which the horse's hoofs rung as if it had been iron; through suburban villages, plum-caked with snow; under a leaden sky, in which the sun hung like a

red-hot warming-pan; by pond after pond, where not only men and boys, but scores after scores of women and girls, were sliding, and roaring, and clapping their lean old sides with laughter, as they tumbled down, and their hobnailed shoes flew up in the air; the air frosty with a lilac haze, through which villas, and commons, and churches, and plantations glimmered. We drive up the hill, Bob and I; we make the last two miles in eleven minutes; we pass that poor, armless man who sits there in the cold, following you with his eyes. I don't give anything, and Bob looks disappointed. We are set down neatly at the gate, and a horse-holder opens the brougham door. I don't give anything; again disappointment on Bob's part. I pay a shilling apiece, and we enter into the glorious building, which is decorated for Christmas, and straightway forgetfulness on Bob's part of everything but that magnificent scene. The enormous edifice is all decorated for Bob and Christmas. The stalls, the columns, the fountains, courts, statues, splendours, are all crowned for Christmas. The delicious negro is singing his Alabama choruses for Christmas and Bob. He has scarcely done, when, Tootarootatoo! Mr. Punch is performing his surprising actions, and hanging the beadle. The stalls are decorated. The refreshment-tables are piled with good things; at

many fountains "MULLED CLARET" is written up in appetizing capitals. "Mulled Claret--oh, jolly! How cold it is!" says Bob; I pass on. "It's only three o'clock," says Bob. "No, only three," I say, meekly. "We dine at seven," sighs Bob, "and it's so-o-o coo-old." I still would take no hints. No claret, no refreshment, no sandwiches, no sausage-rolls for Bob. At last I am obliged to tell him all. Just before we left home, a little Christmas bill popped in at the door and emptied my purse at the threshold. I forgot all about the transaction, and had to borrow half-a-crown from John Coachman to pay for our entrance into the palace of delight. *Now* you see, Bob, why I could not treat you on that second of January when we drove to the palace together; when the girls and boys were sliding on the ponds at Dulwich; when the darkling river was full of floating ice, and the sun was like a warming-pan in the leaden sky.

One more Christmas sight we had, of course; and that sight I think I like as well as Bob himself at Christmas, and at all seasons. We went to a certain garden of delight, where, whatever your cares are, I think you can manage to forget some of them, and muse, and be not unhappy; to a garden beginning with a Z, which is as lively as Noah's ark; where the fox has brought his brush, and the cock

has brought his comb, and the elephant has brought his trunk, and the kangaroo has brought his bag, and the condor his old white wig and black satin hood. On this day it was so cold that the white bears winked their pink eyes, as they plapped up and down by their pool, and seemed to say, "Aha, this weather reminds us of dear home!" "Cold! bah! I have got such a warm coat," says brother Bruin, "I don't mind;" and he laughs on his pole, and clucks down a bun. The squealing hyænas gnashed their teeth and laughed at us quite refreshingly at their window; and, cold as it was, Tiger, Tiger, burning bright, glared at us red-hot through his bars, and snorted blasts of hell. The woolly camel leered at us quite kindly as he paced round his ring on his silent pads. We went to our favourite places. Our dear wambat came up, and had himself scratched very affably. Our fellow-creatures in the monkey-room held out their little black hands, and piteously asked us for Christmas alms. Those darling alligators on their rock winked at us in the most friendly way. The solemn eagles sat alone, and scowled at us from their peaks; whilst little Tom Ratel tumbled over head and heels for us in his usual diverting manner. If I have cares in my mind, I come to the Zoo, and fancy they don't pass the gate. I recognize my friends, my enemies,

in countless cages. I entertained the eagle, the vulture, the old billy-goat, and the black-pated, crimson-necked, blear-eyed, baggy, hook-beaked old marabou stork yesterday at dinner; and when Bob's aunt came to tea in the evening, and asked him what he had seen, he stepped up to her gravely, and said—

“First I saw the white bear, then I saw the black,
Then I saw the camel with a hump upon his back.

*Chorus
of Chil-
dren.*

} Then I saw the camel with a HUMP upon his back!

Then I saw the grey wolf, with mutton in his maw;
Then I saw the wambat waddle in the straw;
Then I saw the elephant with his waving trunk,
Then I saw the monkeys—mercy, how unpleas-
antly they—smelt!”

There. No one can beat that piece of wit, can he, Bob? And so it is all over; but we had a jolly time, whilst you were with us, hadn't we? Present my respects to the doctor; and I hope, my boy, we may spend another merry Christmas next year.

ON A CHALK-MARK ON THE DOOR.

On the doorpost of the house of a friend of mine, a few inches above the lock, is a little chalk-mark, which some sportive boy in passing has probably scratched on the pillar. The doorsteps, the lock, handle, and so forth, are kept decently enough; but this chalk-mark, I suppose some three inches out of the housemaid's beat, has already been on the door for more than a fortnight, and I wonder whether it will be there whilst this paper is being written, whilst it is at the printer's, and, in fine, until the month passes over? I wonder whether the servants in that house will read these remarks about the chalk-mark? That the *Cornhill Magazine* is taken in in that house I know. In fact I have seen it there. In fact I have read it there. In fact

I have written it there. In a word, the house to which I allude is mine—the “editor’s private residence,” to which, in spite of prayers, entreaties, commands, and threats, authors, and ladies, especially, *will* send their communications, although they won’t understand that they injure their own interests by so doing; for how is a man who has his own work to do, his own exquisite inventions to form and perfect—Maria to rescue from the unprincipled Earl—the atrocious General to confound in his own machinations—the angelic Dean to promote to a bishopric, and so forth—how is a man to do all this, under a hundred interruptions, and keep his nerves and temper in that just and equable state in which they ought to be when he comes to assume the critical office? As you will send here, ladies, I must tell you you have a much worse chance than if you forward your valuable articles to Cornhill. Here your papers arrive, at dinner-time, we will say. Do you suppose that is a pleasant period, and that we are to criticize you between the *ovum* and *malum*, between the soup and the dessert? I have touched, I think, on this subject before. I say again, if you want real justice shown you, don’t send your papers to the private residence. At home, for instance, yesterday, having given strict orders that I was to receive nobody, “except on business,” do you sup-

pose a smiling young Scottish gentleman, who forced himself into my study, and there announced himself as agent of a Cattle-food Company, was received with pleasure? There, as I sat in my arm chair, suppose he had proposed to draw a couple of my teeth, would I have been pleased? I could have throttled that agent. I dare say the whole of that day's work will be found tinged with a ferocious misanthropy, occasioned by my clever young friend's intrusion. Cattle-food, indeed! As if beans, oats, warm mashies, and a ball, are to be pushed down a man's throat just as he is meditating on the great social problem, or (for I think it was my epic I was going to touch up) just as he was about to soar to the height of the empyrean!

Having got my cattle-agent out of the door, I resume my consideration of that little mark on the doorpost, which is scored up as the text of the present little sermon; and which I hope will relate, not to chalk, nor to any of its special uses or abuses (such as milk, neck-powder, and the like), but to servants. Surely ours might remove that unseemly little mark. Suppose it were on my coat, might I not request its removal? I remember, when I was at school, a little careless boy, upon whose forehead an ink-mark remained, and was perfectly recognizable for three weeks after its first appearance. May

I take any notice of this chalk-stain on the forehead of my house? Whose business is it to wash that forehead? and ought I to fetch a brush and a little hot water, and wash it off myself?

Yes. But that spot removed, why not come down at six, and wash the doorsteps? I dare say the early rising and exercise would do me a great deal of good. The housemaid, in that case, might lie in bed a little later, and have her tea and the morning paper brought to her in bed: then, of course, Thomas would expect to be helped about the boots and knives; cook about the saucepans, dishes, and what not; the lady's-maid would want somebody to take the curl-papers out of her hair, and get her bath ready. You should have a set of servants for the servants, and these underservants should have slaves to wait on them. The king commands the first lord in waiting to desire the second lord to intimate to the gentleman usher to request the page of the antechamber to entreat the groom of the stairs to implore John to ask the captain of the buttons to desire the maid of the still-room to beg the housekeeper to give out a few more lumps of sugar, as his Majesty has none for his coffee, which probably is getting cold during the negotiation. In our little Brentfords we are all kings more or less. There are orders, gradations,

hierarchies, everywhere. In your house and mine there are mysteries unknown to us. I am not going into the horrid old question of "followers." I don't mean cousins from the country, love-stricken policemen, or gentlemen in mufti from Knightsbridge Barracks; but people who have an occult right on the premises; the uncovenanted servants of the house; grey women who are seen at evening with baskets flitting about area-railings; dingy shawls which drop you furtive curtsies in your neighbourhood; demure little Jacks, who start up from behind boxes in the pantry. Those outsiders wear Thomas's crest and livery, and call him "Sir;" those silent women address the female servants as "Mum," and curtsey before them, squaring their arms over their wretched lean aprons. Then, again, those *servi servorum* have dependants in the vast, silent, poverty-stricken world outside your comfortable kitchen fire, in the world of darkness, and hunger, and miserable cold, and dank, flagged cellars, and huddled straw, and rags, in which pale children are swarming. It may be your beer (which runs with great volubility) has a pipe or two which communicates with those dark caverns where hopeless anguish pours the groan, and would scarce see light but for a scrap or two of candle which has been whipped away from your worship's kitchen. Not many years ago—I don't

know whether before or since that white mark was drawn on the door—a lady occupied the confidential place of housemaid in this “private residence,” who brought a good character, who seemed to have a cheerful temper, whom I used to hear clattering and bumping overhead or on the stairs long before daylight—there, I say, was poor Camilla, scouring the plain, trundling and brushing, and clattering with her pans and brooms, and humming at her work. Well, she had established a smuggling communication of beer over the area frontier. This neat-handed Phyllis used to pack up the nicest baskets of my provender, and convey them to somebody outside—I believe, on my conscience, to some poor friend in distress. Camilla was consigned to her doom. She was sent back to her friends in the country; and when she was gone we heard of many of her faults. She expressed herself, when displeased, in language that I shall not repeat. As for the beer and meat, there was no mistake about them. But *après?* Can I have the heart to be very angry with that poor jade for helping another poorer jade out of my larder? On your honour and conscience, when you were a boy, and the apples looked temptingly over Farmer Quarrington’s hedge, did you never ——? When there was a grand dinner at home, and you were

sliding, with Master Bacon, up and down the stairs, and the dishes came out, did you ever do such a thing as just to——? Well, in many and many a respect servants are like children. They are under domination. They are subject to reproof, to ill temper, to petty exactions and stupid tyrannies not seldom. They scheme, conspire, fawn, and are hypocrites. “Little boys should not loll on chairs.” “Little girls should be seen, and not heard;” and so forth. Have we not almost all learnt these expressions of old foozles: and uttered them ourselves when in the square-toed state? The Eton master, who was breaking a lance with our Paterfamilias of late, turned on Paterfamilias, saying, He knows not the nature and exquisite candour of well-bred English boys. Exquisite fiddlestick’s end, Mr. Master! Do you mean for to go for to tell us that the relations between young gentlemen and their schoolmasters are entirely frank and cordial; that the lad is familiar with the man who can have him flogged; never shirks his exercises; never gets other boys to do his verses; never does other boys’ verses; never breaks bounds; never tells fibs—I mean the fibs permitted by scholastic honour? Did I know of a boy who pretended to such a character, I would forbid my scapegraces to keep company with him. Did I know a schoolmaster who pretended to believe in

the existence of many hundred such boys in one school at one time, I would set that man down as a baby in knowledge of the world. "Who was making that noise?" "I don't know, sir."—And he knows it was the boy next him in school. "Who was climbing over that wall?" "I don't know, sir."—And it is in the speaker's own trousers, very likely, the glass bottle-tops have left their cruel scars. And so with servants. "Who ate up the three pigeons which went down in the pigeon-pie at breakfast this morning?" "O dear me! sir, it was John, who went away last month!"—or, "I think it was Miss Mary's canary-bird, which got out of the cage, and is so fond of pigeons, it never can have enough of them." Yes, it *was* the canary-bird; and Eliza saw it; and Eliza is ready to vow she did. These statements are not true; but please don't call them lies. This is not lying; this is voting with your party. You *must* back your own side. The servants'-hall stands by the servants'-hall against the dining-room. The schoolboys don't tell tales of each other. They agree not to choose to know who has made the noise, who has broken the window, who has eaten up the pigeons, who has picked all the plovers'-eggs out of the aspic, how it is that liqueur brandy of Gledstane's is in such porous glass bottles—and so forth. Suppose Brutus had a

footman, who came and told him that the butler drank the Curaçoa, which of these servants would you dismiss?—the butler, perhaps, but the footman certainly.

No. If your plate and glass are beautifully bright, your bell quickly answered, and Thomas ready, neat, and good-humoured, you are not to expect absolute truth from him. The very obsequiousness and perfection of his service prevents truth. He may be ever so unwell in mind or body, and he must go through his service—hand the shining plate, replenish the spotless glass, lay the glittering fork—never laugh when you yourself or your guests joke—be profoundly attentive, and yet look utterly impassive—exchange a few hurried curses at the door with that unseen slavey who ministers without, and with you be perfectly calm and polite. If you are ill, he will come twenty times in an hour to your bell; or leave the girl of his heart—his mother, who is going to America—his dearest friend, who has come to say farewell—his lunch, and his glass of beer just freshly poured out—any or all of these, if the door-bell rings, or the master calls out “THOMAS” from the hall. Do you suppose you can expect absolute candour from a man whom you may order to powder his hair? As between the Rev. Henry Holyshade and his pupil, the idea

of entire unreserve is utter bosh; so the truth as between you and Jeames or Thomas, or Mary the housemaid, or Betty the cook, is relative, and not to be demanded on one side or the other. Why, respectful civility is itself a lie, which poor Jeames often has to utter or perform to many a swaggering vulgarian, who should black Jeames's boots, did Jeames wear them and not shoes. There is your little Tom, just ten, ordering the great, large, quiet, orderly young man about—shrieking calls for hot water—bullying Jeames because the boots are not varnished enough, or ordering him to go to the stables, and ask Jenkins why the deuce Tomkins hasn't brought his pony round—or what you will. There is mamma rapping the knuckles of Pincot the lady's-maid, and little Miss scolding Martha, who waits up five-pair of stairs in the nursery. Little Miss, Tommy, papa, mamma, you all expect from Martha, from Pincot, from Jenkins, from Jeames, obsequious civility and willing service. My dear, good people, you can't have truth too. Suppose you ask for your newspaper, and Jeames says, "I'm reading it, and jest beg not to be disturbed;" or suppose you ask for a can of water, and he remarks, "You great, big, 'ulking fellar, ain't you big enough to bring it hup yoursulf?" what would your feelings be? Now, if you made similar proposals

or requests to Mr. Jones next door, this is the kind of answer Jones would give you. You get truth habitually from equals only; so my good Mr. Holyshade, don't talk to me about the habitual candour of the young Etonian of high birth, or I have my own opinion of *your* candour or discernment when you do. No. Tom Bowling is the soul of honour and has been true to Black-eyed Syousan since the last time they parted at Wapping Old Stairs; but do you suppose Tom is perfectly frank, familiar, and above-board in his conversation with Admiral Nelson, K.C.B.? There are secrets, prevarications, fibs, if you will, between Tom and the Admiral—between your crew and *their* captain. I know I hire a worthy, clean, agreeable, and conscientious male or female hypocrite, at so many guineas a year, to do so and so for me. Were he other than hypocrite I would send him about his business. Don't let my displeasure be too fierce with him for a fib or two on his own account.

Some dozen years ago, my family being absent in a distant part of the country, and my business detaining me in London, I remained in my own house with three servants on board wages. I used only to breakfast at home; and future ages will be interested to know that this meal used to consist, at that period, of tea, a penny roll, a pat of butter,

and, perhaps, an egg. My weekly bill used invariably to be about fifty shillings; so that, as I never dined in the house, you see, my breakfast, consisting of the delicacies before mentioned, cost about seven shillings and threepence per diem. I must, therefore, have consumed daily—

	s.	d.
A quarter of a pound of tea (say)	1	3
A penny roll (say)	1	0
One pound of butter (say)	1	3
One pound of lump sugar	1	0
A new-laid egg	2	9

Which is the only possible way I have for making out the sum.

Well, I fell ill while under this regimen, and had an illness which, but for a certain doctor, who was brought to me by a certain kind friend I had in those days, would, I think, have prevented the possibility of my telling this interesting anecdote now a dozen years after. Don't be frightened, my dear madam; it is not a horrid, sentimental account of a malady you are coming to—only a question of grocery. This illness, I say, lasted some seventeen days, during which the servants were admirably attentive and kind; and poor John, especially, was up at all hours, watching night after night—amiabile,

cheerful, untiring, respectful, the very best of Johns and nurses.

Twice or thrice in the seventeen days I may have had a glass of *eau sucrée*—say a dozen glasses of *eau sucrée*—certainly not more. Well, this admirable, watchful, cheerful, tender, affectionate John brought me in a little bill for seventeen pounds of sugar consumed during the illness—"Often 'ad sugar and water; always was a callin' for it," says John, wagging his head quite gravely. You are dead, years and years ago, poor John—so patient, so friendly, so kind, so cheerful to the invalid in the fever. But confess, now, wherever you are, that seventeen pounds of sugar to make six glasses of *eau sucrée* was a *little* too strong, wasn't it, John? Ah, how frankly, how trustily, how bravely he lied, poor John! One evening, being at Brighton, in the convalescence, I remember John's step was unsteady, his voice thick, his laugh queer—and having some quinine to give me, John brought the glass to me—not to my mouth, but struck me with it pretty smartly in the eye, which was not the way in which Dr. Elliotson had intended his prescription should be taken. Turning that eye upon him, I ventured to hint that my attendant had been drinking. Drinking! I never was more humiliated at the thought of my own injustice than at John's reply. "Drinking!"

Sulp me! I have had ony one pint of beer with my dinner at one o'clock!"—and he retreats, holding on by a chair. These are fibs, you see, appertaining to the situation. John is drunk. "*Sulp* him, he has only had an 'alf-pint of beer with his dinner six hours ago;" and none of his fellow-servants will say otherwise. Polly is smuggled on board ship. Who tells the lieutenant when he comes his rounds? Boys are playing cards in the bedroom. The out-lying fag announces master coming—out go candles—cards popped into bed—boys sound asleep. Who had that light in the dormitory? Law bless you! the poor dear innocents are every one snoring. Every one snoring, and every snore is a lie told through the nose! Suppose one of your boys or mine is engaged in that awful crime, are we going to break our hearts about it? Come, come. We pull a long face, waggle a grave head, and chuckle within our waistcoats.

Between me and those fellow-creatures of mine who are sitting in the room below, how strange and wonderful is the partition! We meet at every hour of the daylight, and are indebted to each other for a hundred offices of duty and comfort of life; and we live together for years, and don't know each other. John's voice to me is quite different from John's voice when it addresses his mates below.

If I met Hannah in the street with a bonnet on, I doubt whether I should know her. And all these good people with whom I may live for years and years, have cares, interests, dear friends and relatives, mayhap 'schemes, passions, longing hopes, tragedies of their own, from which a carpet and a few planks and beams utterly separate me. When we were at the seaside, and poor Ellen used to look so pale, and run after the postman's bell, and seize a letter in a great scrawling hand, and read it, and cry in a corner, how should we know that the poor little thing's heart was breaking? She fetched the water, and she smoothed the ribbons, and she laid out the dresses, and brought the early cup of tea in the morning, just as if she had had no cares to keep her awake. Henry (who lived out of the house) was the servant of a friend of mine who lived in chambers. There was a dinner one day, and Henry waited all through the dinner. The champagne was properly iced, the dinner was excellently served; every guest was attended to; the dinner disappeared; the dessert was set; the claret was in perfect order, carefully decanted, and more ready. And then Henry said, "If you please, sir, may I go home?" He had received word that his house was on fire; and, having seen through his dinner, he wished to go and look after his children,

and little sticks of furniture. Why, such a man's livery is a uniform of honour. The crest on his button is a badge of bravery.

Do you see—I imagine I do myself—in these little instances, a tinge of humour? Ellen's heart is breaking for handsome Jeames of Buckley Square, whose great legs are kneeling, and who has given a lock of his precious powdered head, to some other than Ellen. Henry is preparing the sauce for his master's wild-ducks while the engines are squirting over his own little nest and brood. Lift these figures up but a storey from the basement to the ground-floor, and the fun is gone. We may be *en pleine tragédie*. Ellen may breathe her last sigh in blank verse, calling down blessings upon James the profligate who deserts her. Henry is a hero, and epaulettes are on his shoulders. *Atqui sciebat*, &c., whatever tortures are in store for him, he will be at his post of duty.

You concede, however, that there is a touch of humour in the two tragedies here mentioned. Why? Is it that the idea of persons at service is somehow ludicrous? Perhaps it is made more so in this country by the splendid appearance of the liveried domestics of great people. When you think that we dress in black ourselves, and put our fellow-creatures in green, pink, or canary-coloured breeches; that we

order them to plaster their hair with flour, having brushed that nonsense out of our own heads fifty years ago; that some of the most genteel and stately among us cause the men who drive their carriages to put on little Albino wigs, and sit behind great nosegays—I say I suppose it is this heaping of gold lace, gaudy colours, blooming plushes, on honest John Trot, which makes the man absurd in our eyes, who need be nothing but a simple reputable citizen and in-door labourer. Suppose, my dear sir, that you yourself were suddenly desired to put on a full dress, or even undress, domestic uniform with our friend Jones's crest repeated in varied combinations of button on your front and back? Suppose, madam, your son were told, that he could not get out except in lower garments of carnation or amber-coloured plush—would you let him? . . . But as you justly say, this is not the question, and besides it is a question fraught with danger, sir; and radicalism, sir; and subversion of the very foundations of the social fabric, sir. . . . Well, John, we won't enter on your great domestic question. Don't let us disport with Jeames's dangerous strength, and the edge-tools about his knife-board: but with Betty and Susan who wield the playful mop, and set on the simmering kettle. Surely you have heard Mrs. Toddles talking to Mrs. Doddles about their mutual maids. Miss Susan must

have a silk gown, and Miss Betty must wear flowers under her bonnet when she goes to church if you please, and did you ever hear such impudence? The servant in many small establishments is a constant and endless theme of talk. What small wage, sleep, meal, what endless scouring, scolding, tramping on messages fall to that poor Susan's lot; what indignation at the little kindly passing word with the grocer's young man, the pot-boy, the chubby butcher! Where such things will end, my dear Mrs. Toddles, I don't know. What wages they will want next, my dear Mrs. Doddles, &c.

Here, dear ladies, is an advertisement which I cut out of *The Times* a few days since, expressly for you:

“A LADY is desirous of obtaining a SITUATION for a very respectable young woman as HEAD KITCHEN-MAID under a man-cook. She has lived four years under a very good cook and housekeeper. Can make ice, and is an excellent baker. She will only take a place in a very good family, where she can have the opportunity of improving herself, and, if possible, staying for two years. Apply by letter to,” &c. &c.

There, Mrs. Toddles, what do you think of that, and did you ever? Well, no, Mrs. Doddles. Upon my word now, Mrs. T., I don't think I ever did. A respectable young woman—as head kitchen-maid—

under a man-cook, will only take a place in a very good family, where she can improve, and stay two years. Just note up the conditions, Mrs. Toddles, mum, if you please, mum, and *then* let us see:—

1. This young woman is to be HEAD kitchen-maid, that is to say, there is to be a chorus of kitchen-maids, of which Y. W. is to be chief.

2. She will only be situated under a man-cook.

(A) Ought he to be a French cook; and

(B), if so, would the lady desire him to be a Protestant?

3. She will only take a place in a *very good family*. How old ought the family to be, and what do you call good? that is the question. How long after the Conquest will do? Would a banker's family do, or is a baronet's good enough? Best say what rank in the peerage would be sufficiently high. But the lady does not say whether she would like a High Church or a Low Church family. Ought there to be unmarried sons, and may they follow a profession? and please say how many daughters;

and would the lady like them to be musical? And how many company dinners a week? Not too many, for fear of fatiguing the upper kitchen-maid; but sufficient, so as to keep the upper kitchen-maid's hand in. [N.B.—I think I can see a rather bewildered expression on the countenances of Mesdames Doddles and Toddles as I am prattling on in this easy bantering way.]

4. The head kitchen-maid wishes to stay for two years, and improve herself under the man-cook, and having of course sucked the brains (as the phrase is) from under the chef's nightcap, then the head kitchen-maid wishes to go.

And upon my word, Mrs. Toddles, mum, I will go and fetch the cab for her. The cab? Why not her ladyship's own carriage and pair, and the head coachman to drive away the head kitchen-maid? You see she stipulates for everything—the time to come; the time to stay; the family she will be with; and as soon as she has improved herself enough, of course the upper kitchen-maid will step into the carriage and drive off.

Well, upon my word and conscience, if things are coming to *this* pass, Mrs. Toddles and Mrs. Doddles, mum, I think I will go upstairs and get a basin and a sponge, and then downstairs and get some hot water; and then I will go and scrub that chalk-mark off my own door with my own hands.

It is wiped off, I declare! After ever so many weeks! Who has done it? It was just a little round-about mark, you know, and it was there for days and weeks, before I ever thought it would be the text of a Roundabout Paper.

ON BEING FOUND OUT.

At the close (let us say) of Queen Anne's reign when I was a boy at a private and preparatory school for young gentlemen, I remember the wiseacre of a master ordering us all, one night, to march into a little garden at the back of the house, and thence to proceed one by one into a tool or hen-house, (I was but a tender little thing just put into short clothes, and can't exactly say whether the house was for tools or hens,) and in that house to put our hands into a sack which stood on a bench, a candle burning beside it. I put my hand into the sack. My hand came out quite black. I went and joined the other boys in the school-room; and all their hands were black too.

By reason of my tender age (and there are some

critics who, I hope, will be satisfied by my acknowledging that I am a hundred and fifty-six next birthday) I could not understand what was the meaning of this night excursion—this candle, this tool-house, this bag of soot. I think we little boys were taken out of our sleep to be brought to the ordeal. We came, then, and showed our little hands to the master; washed them or not—most probably, I should say, not—and so went bewildered back to bed.

Something had been stolen in the school that day; and Mr. Wiseacre having read in a book of an ingenious method of finding out a thief by making him put his hand into a sack (which, if guilty, the rogue would shirk from doing), all we boys were subjected to the trial. Goodness knows what the lost object was, or who stole it. We all had black hands to show to the master. And the thief, whoever he was, was not Found Out that time.

I wonder if the rascal is alive—an elderly scoundrel he must be by this time; and a hoary old hypocrite, to whom an old schoolfellow presents his kindest regards—parenthetically remarking what a dreadful place that private school was; cold, chilblains, bad dinners, not enough victuals, and caning awful!—Are you alive still, I say, you nameless villain, who escaped discovery on that day of crime? I hope you have escaped often since, old sinner. Ah,

what a lucky thing it is, for you and me, my man, that we are *not* found out in all our peccadilloes; and that our backs can slip away from the master and the cane!

Just consider what life would be, if every rogue was found out, and flogged *coram populo*! What a butchery, what an indecency, what an endless swishing of the rod! Don't cry out about my misanthropy. My good friend Mealy-mouth, I will trouble you to tell me, do you go to church? When there, do you say, or do you not, that you are a miserable sinner? and saying so, do you believe or disbelieve it? If you are a M. S., don't you deserve correction, and aren't you grateful if you are to be let off? I say again, what a blessed thing it is that we are not all found out!

Just picture to yourself everybody who does wrong being found out, and punished accordingly. Fancy all the boys in all the school being whipped; and then the assistants, and then the head master (Dr. Badford let us call him). Fancy the provost-marshal being tied up, having previously superintended the correction of the whole army. After the young gentlemen have had their turn for the faulty exercises, fancy Dr. Lincolnsinn being taken up for certain faults in *his* Essay and Review. After the clergyman has cried his peccavi, suppose we hoist

up a bishop, and give him a couple of dozen! (I see my Lord Bishop of Double-Gloucester sitting in a very uneasy posture on his right reverend bench.) After we have cast off the bishop, what are we to say to the Minister who appointed him? My Lord Cinqwarden, it is painful to have to use personal correction to a boy of your age; but really . . . *Siste tandem, carnifex!* The butchery is too horrible. The hand drops powerless, appalled at the quantity of birch which it must cut and brandish. I am glad we are not all found out, I say again; and protest, my dear brethren, against our having our deserts.

To fancy all men found out and punished is bad enough; but imagine all women found out in the distinguished social circle in which you and I have the honour to move. Is it not a mercy that a many of these fair criminals remain unpunished and undiscovered? There is Mrs. Longbow, who is for ever practising, and who shoots poisoned arrows, too; when you meet her you don't call her liar, and charge her with the wickedness she has done, and is doing. There is Mrs. Painter, who passes for a most respectable woman, and a model in society. There is no use in saying what you really know regarding her and her goings on. There is Diana Hunter—what a little haughty prude it is; and yet *we* know stories about her which are not altogether

edifying. I say it is best, for the sake of the good, that the bad should not all be found out. You don't want your children to know the history of that lady in the next box, who is so handsome, and whom they admire so. Ah me, what would life be if we were all found out, and punished for all our faults? Jack Ketch would be in permanence; and then who would hang Jack Ketch?

They talk of murderers being pretty certainly found out. Psha! I have heard an authority awfully competent vow and declare that scores and hundreds of murders are committed, and nobody is the wiser. That terrible man mentioned one or two ways of committing murder, which he maintained were quite common, and were scarcely ever found out. A man, for instance, comes home to his wife, and . . . but I pause—I know that this Magazine has a very large circulation. Hundreds and hundreds of thousands—why not say a million of people at once?—well, say a million, read it. And amongst these countless readers, I might be teaching some monster how to make away with his wife without being found out, some fiend of a woman how to destroy her dear husband. I will *not* then tell this easy and simple way of murder, as communicated to me by a most respectable party in the confidence of private intercourse. Suppose some gentle reader were to try

this most simple and easy receipt—it seems to me almost infallible—and come to grief in consequence, and be found out and hanged? Should I ever pardon myself for having been the means of doing injury to a single one of our esteemed subscribers? The prescription whereof I speak—that is to say, whereof I *don't* speak—shall be buried in this bosom. No, I am a humane man. I am not one of your Bluebeards to go and say to my wife, “My dear! I am going away for a few days to Brighton. Here are all the keys of the house. You may open every door and closet, except the one at the end of the oak-room opposite the fire-place, with the little bronze Shakspeare on the mantelpiece (or what not).” I don’t say this to a woman—unless, to be sure, I want to get rid of her—because, after such a caution, I know she’ll peep into the closet. I say nothing about the closet at all. I keep the key in my pocket, and a being whom I love, but who, as I know, has many weaknesses, out of harm’s way. You toss up your head, dear angel, drub on the ground with your lovely little feet, on the table with your sweet rosy fingers, and cry, “Oh, sneerer! You don’t know the depth of woman’s feeling, the lofty scorn of all deceit, the entire absence of mean curiosity in the sex, or never, never would you libel us so!” Ah, Delia! dear, dear Delia! It is because

I fancy I *do* know something about you (not all, mind—no, no; no man knows that)—Ah, my bride, my ringdove, my rose, my poppet—choose, in fact, whatever name you like—bulbul of my grove, fountain of my desert, sunshine of my darkling life, and joy of my dungeoned existence, it is because I *do* know a little about you that I conclude to say nothing of that private closet, and keep my key in my pocket. You take away that closet-key then, and the house-key. You lock Delia in. You keep her out of harm's way and gadding, and so she never *can* be found out.

And yet by little strange accidents and coincidents how we are being found out every day. You remember that old story of the Abbé Kakatoes, who told the company at supper one night how the first confession he ever received was—from a murderer let us say. Presently enters to supper the Marquis de Croquemitaine. "Palsambleu, abbé!" says the brilliant marquis, taking a pinch of snuff, "are you here? Gentlemen and ladies! I was the abbé's first penitent, and I made him a confession which I promise you astonished him."

To be sure how queerly things are found out! Here is an instance. Only the other day I was writing in these Roundabout Papers about a certain man, whom I facetiously called Baggs, and who had

abused me to my friends, who of course told me. Shortly after that paper was published another friend—Sacks let us call him—scowls fiercely at me as I am sitting in perfect good-humour at the club, and passes on without speaking. A cut. A quarrel. Sacks thinks it is about him that I was writing: whereas, upon my honour and conscience, I never had him once in my mind, and was pointing my moral from quite another man. But don't you see, by this wrath of the guilty-conscienced Sacks, that he had been abusing me too? He has owned himself guilty, never having been accused. He has winced when nobody thought of hitting him. I did but put the cap out, and madly butting and chafing, behold my friend rushes to put his head into it! Never mind, Sacks, you are found out; but I bear you no malice, my man.

And yet to be found out, I know from my own experience, must be painful and odious, and cruelly mortifying to the inward vanity. Suppose I am a poltroon, let us say. With fierce moustache, loud talk, plentiful oaths, and an immense stick, I keep up nevertheless a character for courage. I swear fearfully at cabmen and women; brandish my bludgeon, and perhaps knock down a little man or two with it: brag of the images which I break at the shooting-gallery, and pass amongst my friends for a

whiskery fire-eater, afraid of neither man nor dragon. Ah me! Suppose some brisk little chap steps up and gives me a caning in St. James's Street, with all the heads of my friends looking out of all the club windows. My reputation is gone. I frighten no man more. My nose is pulled by whipper-snappers, who jump up on a chair to reach it. I am found out. And in the days of my triumphs, when people were yet afraid of me, and were taken in by my swagger, I always knew that I was a lily-liver, and expected that I should be found out some day.

That certainty of being found out must haunt and depress many a bold braggadocio spirit. Let us say it is a clergyman, who can pump copious floods of tears out of his own eyes and those of his audience. He thinks to himself, "I am but a poor swindling, chattering rogue. My bills are unpaid. I have jilted several women whom I have promised to marry. I don't know whether I believe what I preach, and I know I have stolen the very sermon over which I have been snivelling. Have they found me out?" says he, as his head drops down on the cushion.

Then your writer, poet, historian, novelist, or what not? The *Beacon* says that "Jones's work is one of the first order." The *Lamp* declares that "Jones's tragedy surpasses every work since the

days of Him of Avon." The *Comet* asserts that "J.'s 'Life of Goody Twoshoes' is a *κτῆμα ἐς αἰῶνα*, a noble and enduring monument to the fame of that admirable Englishwoman," and so forth. But then Jones knows that he has lent the critic of the *Beacon* five pounds; that his publisher has a half-share in the *Lamp*; and that the *Comet* comes repeatedly to dine with him. It is all very well. Jones is immortal until he is found out; and then down comes the extinguisher, and the immortal is dead and buried. The idea (*dies iræ!*) of discovery must haunt many a man, and make him uneasy, as the trumpets are puffing in his triumph. Brown, who has a higher place than he deserves, cowers before Smith, who has found him out. What is a chorus of critics shouting "Bravo?"—a public clapping hands and flinging garlands? Brown knows that Smith has found him out. Puff, trumpets! Wave, banners! Huzza, boys, for the immortal Brown! "This is all very well," B. thinks (bowing the while, smiling, laying his hand to his heart); "but there stands Smith at the window: *he* has measured me; and some day the others will find me out too." It is a very curious sensation to sit by a man who has found you out, and who, as you know, has found you out; or, *vice versâ*, to sit with a man whom *you* have found out. His talent? Bah! His virtue? We know

a little story or two about his virtue, and he knows we know it. We are thinking over friend Robinson's antecedents, as we grin, bow and talk; and we are both humbugs together. Robinson a good fellow, is he? You know how he behaved to Hicks? A good-natured man, is he? Pray do you remember that little story of Mrs. Robinson's black eye? How men have to work, to talk, to smile, to go to bed, and try and sleep, with this dread of being found out on their consciences! Bardolph, who has robbed a church, and Nym, who has taken a purse, go to their usual haunts, and smoke their pipes with their companions. Mr. Detective Bullseye appears, and says, "Oh, Bardolph! I want you about that there pyx business!" Mr. Bardolph knocks the ashes out of his pipe, puts out his hands to the little steel cuffs, and walks away quite meekly. He is found out. He must go. "Good-by, Doll Tearsheet! Good-by, Mrs. Quickly, ma'am!" The other gentlemen and ladies *de la société* look on and exchange mute adieux with the departing friends. And an assured time will come when the other gentlemen and ladies will be found out too.

What a wonderful and beautiful provision of nature it has been that, for the most part, our womankind are not endowed with the faculty of finding us out! *They* don't doubt, and probe, and

weigh, and take your measure. Lay down this paper, my benevolent friend and reader, go into your drawing-room now, and utter a joke ever so old, and I wager sixpence the ladies there will all begin to laugh. Go to Brown's house, and tell Mrs. Brown and the young ladies what you think of him, and see what a welcome you will get! In like manner, let him come to your house, and tell *your* good lady his candid opinion of you, and fancy how she will receive him! Would you have your wife and children know you exactly for what you are, and esteem you precisely at your worth? If so, my friend, you will live in a dreary house, and you will have but a chilly fireside. Do you suppose the people round it don't see your homely face as under a glamour, and, as it were, with a halo of love round it? You don't fancy you *are*, as you seem to them? No such thing, my man. Put away that monstrous conceit, and be thankful that *they* have not found you out.

ON A HUNDRED YEARS HENCE.

WHERE have I just read of a game played at a country house? The party assembles round a table with pens, ink, and paper. Some one narrates a tale containing more or less incidents and personages. Each person of the company then writes down, to the best of his memory and ability, the anecdote just narrated, and finally the papers are to be read out. I do not say I should like to play often at this game, which might possibly be a tedious and lengthy pastime, not by any means so amusing as smoking a cigar in the conservatory; or even listening to the young ladies playing their piano-pieces; or to Hobbs and Nobbs lingering round the bottle and talking over the morning's run with the hounds; but surely it is a moral and ingenious sport. They say the variety of narratives is often

very odd and amusing. The original story becomes so changed and distorted that at the end of all the statements you are puzzled to know where the truth is at all. As time is of small importance to the cheerful persons engaged in this sport, perhaps a good way of playing it would be to spread it over a couple of years. Let the people who played the game in '60 all meet and play it once more in '61, and each write his story over again. Then bring out your original and compare notes. Not only will the stories differ from each other, but the writers will probably differ from themselves. In the course of the year the incidents will grow or will dwindle strangely. The least authentic of the statements will be so lively or so malicious, or so neatly put, that it will appear most like the truth. I like these tales and sportive exercises. I had begun a little print collection once. I had Addison in his night-gown in bed at Holland House, requesting young Lord Warwick to remark how a Christian should die. I had Cambronne clutching his cocked-hat, and uttering the immortal *la Garde meurt et ne se rend pas*. I had the "Vengeur" going down, and all the crew hurrying like madmen. I had Alfred toasting the muffin; Curtius (Haydon) jumping into the gulf; with extracts from Napoleon's bulletins, and a fine authentic portrait of Baron Munchausen.

What man who has been before the public at all has not heard similar wonderful anecdotes regarding himself and his own history? In these humble essaykins I have taken leave to egotize. I cry out about the shoes which pinch me, and, as I fancy, more naturally and pathetically than if my neighbour's corns were trodden under foot. I prattle about the dish which I love, the wine which I like, the talk I heard yesterday—about Brown's absurd airs—Jones's ridiculous elation when he thinks he has caught me in a blunder (a part of the fun, you see, is that Jones will read this, and will perfectly well know that I mean him, and that we shall meet and grin at each other with entire politeness). This is not the highest kind of speculation, I confess, but it is a gossip which amuses some folks. A brisk and honest small-beer will refresh those who do not care for the frothy outpourings of heavier taps. A two of clubs may be a good, handy little card sometimes, and able to tackle a king of diamonds, if it is a little trump. Some philosophers get their wisdom with deep thought and out of ponderous libraries; I pick up my small crumbs of cogitation at a dinner-table; or from Mrs. Mary and Miss Louisa, as they are prattling over their five-o'clock tea.

Well, yesterday at dinner Jucundus was good enough to tell me a story about myself, which he

had heard from a lady of his acquaintance, to whom I send my best compliments. The tale is this. At nine o'clock on the evening of the 31st of November last, just before sunset, I was seen leaving No. 96, Abbey Road, St. John's Wood, leading two little children by the hand, one of them in a nankeen pelisse, and the other having a mole on the third finger of his left hand (she thinks it was the third finger, but is quite sure it was the left hand). Thence I walked with them to Charles Boroughbridge's, pork and sausage man, No. 29, Upper Theresa Road. Here, whilst I left the little girl innocently eating a polony in the front shop, I and Boroughbridge retired with the boy into the back parlour, where Mrs. Boroughbridge was playing cribbage. She put up the cards and boxes, took out a chopper and a napkin, and we cut the little boy's little throat (which he bore with great pluck and resolution), and made him into sausage-meat by the aid of Purkis's excellent sausage-machine. The little girl at first could not understand her brother's absence, but, under the pretence of taking her to see Mr. Fechter in *Hamlet*, I led her down to the New River at Sadler's Wells, where a body of a child in a nankeen pelisse was subsequently found, and has never been recognized to the present day. And this Mrs. Lynx can aver, because she saw the whole

transaction with her own eyes, as she told Mr. Jucundus.

I have altered the little details of the anecdote somewhat. But this story is, I vow and declare, as true as Mrs. Lynx's. Gracious goodness! how do lies begin? What are the averages of lying? Is the same amount of lies told about every man, and do we pretty much all tell the same amount of lies? Is the average greater in Ireland than in Scotland, or *vice versa*—among women than among men? Is this a lie I am telling now? If I am talking about you, the odds are, perhaps, that it is. I look back at some which have been told about me, and speculate on them with thanks and wonder. Dear friends have told them of me, have told them to me of myself. Have they not to and of you, dear friend? A friend of mine was dining at a large dinner of clergymen, and a story, as true as the sausage story above given, was told regarding me, by one of those reverend divines, in whose frocks sit some anile chatterboxes, as any man who knows this world knows. They take the privilege of their gown. They cabal, and tattle, and hiss, and cackle combinations under their breath. I say the old women of the other sex are not more talkative or more mischievous than some of these. "Such a man ought not to be spoken to," says Gobemouche, narrating

the story—and such a story! “And I am surprised he is admitted into society at all.” Yes, dear Gobe-mouche, but the story wasn’t true; and I had no more done the wicked deed in question than I had run away with the Queen of Sheba.

I have always longed to know what that story was (or what collection of histories), which a lady had in her mind to whom a servant of mine applied for a place, when I was breaking up my establishment once, and going abroad. Brown went with a very good character from us, which, indeed, she fully deserved after several years’ faithful service. But when Mrs. Jones read the name of the person out of whose employment Brown came, “That is quite sufficient,” says Mrs. Jones. “You may go. I will never take a servant out of *that* house.” Ah, Mrs. Jones, how I should like to know what that crime was, or what that series of villanies, which made you determine never to take a servant out of my house. Do you believe in the story of the little boy and the sausages? Have you swallowed that little minced infant? Have you devoured that young Polonius? Upon my word you have maw enough. We somehow greedily gobble down all stories in which the characters of our friends are chopped up, and believe wrong of them without inquiry. In a late serial work written by this hand, I remember making some pathetic

remarks about our propensity to believe ill of our neighbours—and I remember the remarks, not because they were valuable, or novel, or ingenious, but because, within three days after they had appeared in print, the moralist who wrote them, walking home with a friend, heard a story about another friend, which story he straightway believed, and which story was scarcely more true than that sausage fable which is here set down. *O mea culpa, mea maxima culpa!* But though the preacher trips, shall not the doctrine be good? Yea, brethren! Here be the rods. Look you, here are the scourges. Choose me a nice long, swishing, buddy one, light and well-poised in the handle, thick and bushy at the tail. Pick me out a whip-cord thong with some dainty knots in it—and now—we all deserve it—whish, whish, whish! Let us cut into each other all round.

A favourite liar and servant of mine was a man I once had to drive a brougham. He never came to my house, except for orders, and once when he helped to wait at dinner so clumsily that it was agreed we would dispense with his further efforts. The (job) brougham horse used to look dreadfully lean and tired, and the livery-stable keeper complained that we worked him too hard. Now, it turned out that there was a neighbouring butcher's lady who liked to ride in a brougham; and Tomkins

lent her ours, drove her cheerfully to Richmond and Putney, and, I suppose, took out a payment in mutton-chops. We gave this good Tomkins wine and medicine for his family when sick—we supplied him with little comforts and extras which need not now be remembered—and the grateful creature rewarded us by informing some of our tradesmen whom he honoured with his custom, “Mr. Roundabout? Lor’ bless you! I carry him up to bed drunk every night in the week.” He, Tomkins, being a man of seven stone weight and five feet high; whereas his employer was—but here modesty interferes, and I decline to enter into the *avoir-dupois* question.

Now, what was Tomkins’ motive for the utterance and dissemination of these lies? They could further no conceivable end or interest of his own. Had they been true stories, Tomkins’ master would still, and reasonably, have been more angry than at the fables. It was but suicidal slander on the part of Tomkins—must come to a discovery—must end in a punishment. The poor wretch had got his place under, as it turned out, a fictitious character. He might have stayed in it, for of course Tomkins had a wife and poor innocent children. He might have had bread, beer, bed, character, coats, coals. He might have nestled in

our little island, comfortably sheltered from the storms of life; but we were compelled to cast him out, and send him driving, lonely, perishing, tossing, starving, to sea—to drown. To drown? There be other modes of death whereby rogues die. Good-by, Tomkins. And so the nightcap is put on, and the bolt is drawn for poor T.

Suppose we were to invite volunteers amongst our respected readers to send in little statements of the lies which they know have been told about themselves; what a heap of correspondence, what an exaggeration of malignities, what a crackling bonfire of incendiary falsehoods, might we not gather together! And a lie once set going, having the breath of life breathed into it by the father of lying, and ordered to run its diabolical little course, lives with a prodigious vitality. You say, "*Magna est veritas et prævalebit.*" Psha! Great lies are as great as great truths, and prevail constantly, and day after day. Take an instance or two out of my own little budget. I sit near a gentleman at dinner, and the conversation turns upon a certain anonymous literary performance which at the time is amusing the town. "Oh," says the gentleman, "everybody knows who wrote that paper: it is Momus's." I was a young author at the time, perhaps proud of my bantling: "I beg your pardon," I say, "it was

written by your humble servant." "Indeed!" was all that the man replied, and he shrugged his shoulders, turned his back, and talked to his other neighbour. I never heard sarcastic incredulity more finely conveyed than by that "indeed." "Impudent liar," the gentleman's face said, as clear as face could speak. Where was Magna Veritas, and how did she prevail then? She lifted up her voice, she made her appeal, and she was kicked out of court. In New York I read a newspaper criticism one day (by an exile from our shores who has taken up his abode in the Western Republic), commenting upon a letter of mine which had appeared in a contemporary volume, and wherein it was stated that the writer was a lad in such and such a year, and, in point of fact, I was, at the period spoken of, nineteen years of age. "Falsehood, Mr. Roundabout," says the noble critic: "you were then not a lad; you were then six-and-twenty years of age." You see he knew better than papa and mamma and parish register. It was easier for him to think and say I lied, on a twopenny matter connected with my own affairs, than to imagine he was mistaken. Years ago, in a time when we were very mad wags, Arcturus and myself met a gentleman from China who knew the language. We began to speak Chinese against him. We said we were born in

China. We were two to one. We spoke the mandarin dialect with perfect fluency. We had the company with us; as in the old, old days, the squeak of the real pig was voted not to be so natural as the squeak of the sham pig. O Arcturus, the sham pig squeaks in our streets now to the applause of multitudes, and the real porker grunts unheeded in his sty!

I once talked for some little time with an amiable lady: it was for the first time; and I saw an expression of surprise on her kind face, which said as plainly as face could say, "Sir, do you know that up to this moment I have had a certain opinion of you, and that I begin to think I have been mistaken or misled?" I not only know that she had heard evil reports of me, but I know who told her—one of those acute fellows, my dear brethren, of whom we spoke in a previous sermon, who has found me out—found out actions which I never did, found out thoughts and sayings which I never spoke, and judged me accordingly. Ah, my lad! have I found *you* out? *O risum teneatis*. Perhaps the person I am accusing is no more guilty than I.

How comes it that the evil which men say spreads so widely and lasts so long, whilst our good, kind words don't seem somehow to take root and bear blossom? Is it that in the stony hearts of

mankind these pretty flowers can't find a place to grow? Certain it is that scandal is good brisk talk, whereas praise of one's neighbour is by no means lively hearing. An acquaintance grilled, scored, devilled, and served with mustard and cayenne pepper, excites the appetite; whereas a slice of cold friend with currant jelly is but a sickly, unrelishing meat.

Now, such being the case, my dear worthy Mrs. Candour, in whom I know there are a hundred good and generous qualities: it being perfectly clear that the good things which we say of our neighbours don't fructify, but somehow perish in the ground where they are dropped, whilst the evil words are wafted by all the winds of scandal, take root in all soils, and flourish amazingly—seeing, I say, that this conversation does not give us a fair chance, suppose we give up censoriousness altogether, and decline uttering our opinions about Brown, Jones, and Robinson (and Mesdames B., J., and R.) at all. We may be mistaken about every one of them, as, please goodness, those anecdote-mongers against whom I have uttered my meek protest have been mistaken about me. We need not go to the extent of saying that Mrs. Manning was an amiable creature, much misunderstood; and Jack Thurtell a gallant, unfortunate fellow, not

near so black as he was painted; but we will try and avoid personalities altogether in talk, won't we? We will range the fields of science, dear madam, and communicate to each other the pleasing results of our studies. We will, if you please, examine the infinitesimal wonders of nature through the microscope. We will cultivate entomology. We will sit with our arms round each other's waists on the *pons asinorum*, and see the stream of mathematics flow beneath. We will take refuge in cards, and play at "beggar my neighbour," not abuse my neighbour. We will go to the Zoological Gardens and talk freely about the gorilla and his kindred, but not talk about people who can talk in their turn. Suppose we praise the High Church? we offend the Low Church. The Broad Church? High and Low are both offended. What do you think of Lord Derby as a politician? And what is your opinion of Lord Palmerston? If you please, will you play me those lovely variations of "In my cottage near a wood?" It is a charming air (you know it in French, I suppose? *Ah! te dirai-je, maman!*) and was a favourite with poor Marie Antoinette. I say "poor," because I have a right to speak with pity of a sovereign who was renowned for so much beauty and so much misfortune. But as for giving any opinion on her conduct, saying that she was good

or bad, or indifferent, goodness forbid! We have agreed we will not be censorious. Let us have a game at cards—at *écarté*, if you please. You deal. I ask for cards. I lead the deuce of clubs. . . .

What? there is no deuce! Deuce take it! What? People *will* go on talking about their neighbours, and won't have their mouths stopped by cards, or ever so much microscopes and aquariums? Ah, my poor dear Mrs. Candour, I agree with you. By the way, did you ever see anything like Lady Godiva Trotter's dress last night? People *will* go on chattering, although we hold our tongues; and, after all, my good soul, what will their scandal matter a hundred years hence?

SMALL-BEER CHRONICLE.

Not long since, at a certain banquet, I had the good fortune to sit by Doctor Polymathesis, who knows everything, and who, about the time when the claret made its appearance, mentioned that old dictum of the grumbling Oxford Don, that "ALL CLARET *would be port if it could!*" Imbibing a bumper of one or the other not ungratefully, I thought to myself, "Here surely, Mr. Roundabout, is a good text for one of your reverence's sermons." Let us apply to the human race, dear brethren, what is here said of the vintages of Portugal and Gascony, and we shall have no difficulty in perceiving how many clarets aspire to be ports in their way; how most men and women of our acquaintance, how we ourselves, are Aquitainians giving ourselves

Lusitanian airs; how we wish to have credit for being stronger, braver, more beautiful, more worthy than we really are.

Nay, the beginning of this hypocrisy—a desire to excel, a desire to be hearty, fruity, generous, strength-imparting—is a virtuous and noble ambition; and it is most difficult for a man in his own case, or his neighbour's, to say at what point this ambition transgresses the boundary of virtue, and becomes vanity, pretence, and self-seeking. You are a poor man, let us say, showing a bold face to adverse fortune, and wearing a confident aspect. Your purse is very narrow, but you owe no man a penny; your means are scanty, but your wife's gown is decent, your old coat well brushed; your children at a good school; you grumble to no one; ask favours of no one; truckle to no neighbours on account of their superior rank, or (a worse, and a meaner, and a more common crime still) envy none for their better fortune. To all outward appearances you are as well to do as your neighbours, who have thrice your income. There may be in this case some little mixture of pretension in your life and behaviour. You certainly *do* put on a smiling face whilst fortune is pinching you. Your wife and girls, so smart and neat at evening-parties, are cutting, patching, and cobbling all day to make both ends of life's haber-

dashery meet. You give a friend a bottle of wine on occasion, but are content yourself with a glass of whisky-and-water. You avoid a cab, saying that of all things you like to walk home after dinner (which you know, my good friend, is a fib). I grant you that in this scheme of life there does enter ever so little hypocrisy; that this claret is loaded, as it were; but your desire to *portify* yourself is amiable, is pardonable, is perhaps honourable: and were there no other hypocrisies than yours in the world we should be a set of worthy fellows; and sermonizers, moralizers, satirizers, would have to hold their tongues, and go to some other trade to get a living.

But you know you *will* step over that boundary line of virtue and modesty, into the district where humbug and vanity begin, and there the moralizer catches you and makes an example of you. For instance, in a certain novel in another place my friend Mr. Talbot Twysden is mentioned—a man whom you and I know to be a wretched ordinaire, but who persists in treating himself as if he was the finest '20 port. In our Britain there are hundreds of men like him; for ever striving to swell beyond their natural size, to strain beyond their natural strength, to step beyond their natural stride. Search, search within your own waistcoats, dear brethren—

you know in your hearts, which of your ordinaire qualities you would pass off, and fain consider as first-rate port. And why not you yourself, Mr. Preacher? says the congregation. Dearly beloved, neither in nor out of this pulpit do I profess to be bigger, or cleverer, or wiser, or better than any of you. A short while since, a certain Reviewer announced that I gave myself great pretensions as a philosopher. I a philosopher! I advance pretensions! My dear Saturday friend, And you? Don't you teach everything to everybody? and punish the naughty boys if they don't learn as you bid them? You teach politics to Lord John and Mr. Gladstone. You teach poets how to write; painters, how to paint; gentlemen, manners; and opera-dancers, how to pirouette. I was not a little amused of late by an instance of the modesty of our Saturday friend, who, more Athenian than the Athenians, and à propos of a Greek book by a Greek author, sat down and gravely showed the Greek gentleman how to write his own language.

No, I do not, as far as I know, try to be port at all; but offer in these presents, a sound genuine ordinaire, at 18s. per doz. let us say, grown on my own hill-side, and offered *de bon cœur* to those who will sit down under my *tonnelle*, and have a half-hour's drink and gossip. It is none of your hot

porto, my friend. I know there is much better and stronger liquor elsewhere. Some pronounce it sour: some say it is thin; some that it has wofully lost its flavour. This may or may not be true. There are good and bad years; years that surprise everybody; years of which the produce is small and bad, or rich and plentiful. But if my tap is not genuine it is naught, and no man should give himself the trouble to drink it. I do not even say that I would be port if I could; knowing that port (by which I would imply much stronger, deeper, richer, and more durable liquor than my vine-yard can furnish) is not relished by all palates, or suitable to all heads. We will assume then, dear brother, that you and I are tolerably modest people; and, ourselves being thus out of the question, proceed to show how pretentious our neighbours are, and how very many of them would be port if they could.

Have you never seen a small man from college placed amongst great folk, and giving himself the airs of a man of fashion? He goes back to his common room with fond reminiscences of Ermine Castle or Strawberry Hall. He writes to the dear countess, to say that dear Lord Lollypop is getting on very well at St. Boniface, and that the accident which he met with in a scuffle with an inebriated bargeman only showed his spirit and honour, and

will not permanently disfigure his lordship's nose. He gets his clothes from dear Lollypop's London tailor, and wears a mauve or magenta tie when he rides out to see the hounds. A love of fashionable people is a weakness, I do not say of all, but of some tutors. Witness that Eton tutor t'other day, who intimated that in Cornhill we could not understand the perfect purity, delicacy, and refinement of those genteel families who sent their sons to Eton. O usher, *mon ami!* Old Sam Johnson, who, too, had been an usher in his early life, kept a little of that weakness always. Suppose Goldsmith had knocked him up at three in the morning and proposed a boat to Greenwich, as Topham Beauclerc and his friend did, would he have said, "What, my boy, are you for a frolic? I'm with you!" and gone and put on his clothes? Rather he would have pitched poor Goldsmith downstairs. He would have liked to be port if he could. Of course *we* wouldn't. Our opinion of the Portugal grape is known. It grows very high, and is very sour, and we don't go for that kind of grape at all.

"I was walking with Mr. Fox"—and sure this anecdote comes very pat after the grapes—"I was walking with Mr. Fox in the Louvre," says Benjamin West (*apud* some paper I have just been reading), "and I remarked how many people turned round to

look at *me*. This shows the respect of the French for the fine arts." This is a curious instance of a very small claret indeed, which imagined itself to be port of the strongest body. There are not many instances of a faith so deep, so simple, so satisfactory as this. I have met many who would like to be port; but with few of the Gascon sort, who absolutely believed they *were* port. George III. believed in West's port, and thought Reynolds' overrated stuff. When I saw West's pictures at Philadelphia, I looked at them with astonishment and awe. Hide, blushing glory, hide your head under your old nightcap. O immortality! is this the end of you? Did any of you, my dear brethren, ever try and read "Blackmore's Poems," or the "Epics of Baour-Lormian," or the "Henriade," or—what shall we say?—Pollok's "Course of Time?" They were thought to be more lasting than brass by some people, and where are they now? And *our* masterpieces of literature—*our* ports—that, if not immortal, at any rate are to last their fifty, their hundred years—oh, sirs, don't you think a very small cellar will hold them?

Those poor people in brass, on pedestals, hectoring about Trafalgar Square and that neighbourhood, don't you think many of them—apart even from the ridiculous execution—cut rather a ridiculous figure,

and that we are too eager to set up our ordinaire heroism and talent for port? A Duke of Wellington or two I will grant, though even of these idols a moderate supply will be sufficient. Some years ago a famous and witty French critic was in London, with whom I walked the streets. I am ashamed to say that I informed him (being in hopes that he was about to write some papers regarding the manners and customs of this country) that all the statues he saw represented the Duke of Wellington. That on the arch opposite Apsley House? the Duke in a cloak, and cocked-hat, on horseback. That behind Apsley House in an airy fig-leaf costume? the Duke again. That in Cockspur Street? the Duke with a pigtail—and so on. I showed him an army of Dukes. There are many bronze heroes who after a few years look already as foolish, awkward, and out of place as a man, say at Shoolbred's or Swan and Edgar's. For example, those three Grenadiers in Pall Mall, who have been up only a few months, don't you pity those unhappy household troops, who have to stand frowning and looking fierce there; and think they would like to step down and go to barracks? That they fought very bravely there is no doubt; but so did the Russians fight very bravely; and the French fight very bravely; and so did Colonel Jones and the 99th, and Colonel Brown and

the 100th; and I say again that ordinaire should not give itself port airs, and that an honest ordinaire would blush to be found swaggering so. I am sure if you could consult the Duke of York, who is impaled on his column between the two clubs, and ask his late Royal Highness whether he thought he ought to remain there, he would say no. A brave, worthy man, not a braggart or boaster, to be put upon that heroic perch must be painful to him. Lord George Bentinck, I suppose, being in the midst of the family park in Cavendish Square, may conceive that he has a right to remain in his place. But look at William of Cumberland, with his hat cocked over his eye, prancing behind Lord George on his Roman-nosed charger; he, depend on it, would be for getting off his horse if he had the permission. He did not hesitate about trifles, as we know; but he was a very truth-telling and honourable soldier: and as for heroic rank and statuesque dignity, I would wager a dozen of '20 port against a bottle of pure and sound Bordeaux, at 18s. per dozen (bottles included), that he never would think of claiming any such absurd distinction. They have got a statue of Thomas Moore at Dublin, I hear. Is he on horseback? Some men should have, say, a fifty years' lease of glory. After a while some gentlemen now in brass should go to the melting

furnace, and reappear in some other gentleman's shape. Lately I saw that Melville column rising over Edinburgh; come, good men and true, don't you feel a little awkward and uneasy when you walk under it? Who was this to stand in heroic places? and is yon the man whom Scotchmen most delight to honour? I must own deferentially that there is a tendency in North Britain to over-estimate its heroes. Scotch ale is very good and strong, but it is not stronger than all the other beer in the world, as some Scottish patriots would insist. When there has been a war, and stout old Sandy Sansculotte returns home from India or Crimea, what a bagpiping, shouting, hurraying, and self-glorification takes place round about him! You would fancy, to hear Mc Orator after dinner, that the Scotch had fought all the battles, killed all the Russians, Indian rebels, or what not. In Cupar-Fife, there's a little inn called the "Battle of Waterloo," and what do you think the sign is? "The Battle of Waterloo" is one broad Scotchman laying about him with a broadsword. Yes, yes, my dear Mac, you are wise, you are good, you are clever, you are handsome, you are brave, you are rich, &c.; but so is Jones over the border. Scotch salmon is good, but there are other good fish in the sea. I once heard a Scotchman lecture on poetry in London. Of course the pieces he selected

were chiefly by Scottish authors, and Walter Scott was his favourite poet. I whispered to my neighbour, who was a Scotchman (by the way, the audience were almost all Scotch, and the room was All-Mac's—I beg your pardon, but I couldn't help it, I really couldn't help it)—“The professor has said the best poet was a Scotchman: I wager that he will say the worst poet was a Scotchman, too.” And sure enough that worst poet, when he made his appearance, was a Northern Briton.

And as we are talking of bragging, and I am on my travels, can I forget one mighty republic—one—two mighty republics, where people are notoriously fond of passing off their claret for port? I am very glad, for the sake of a kind friend, that there is a great and influential party in the United, and, I trust, in the Confederate States,* who believe that Catawba wine is better than the best Champagne. Opposite that famous old White House at Washington, whereof I shall ever have a grateful memory, they have set up an equestrian statue of General Jackson, by a self-taught American artist of no inconsiderable genius and skill. At an evening-party a member of Congress seized me in a corner of the room, and asked me if I did not think this was *the*

* Written in July, 1861.

finest equestrian statue in the world? How was I to deal with this plain question, put to me in a corner? I was bound to reply, and accordingly said that I did *not* think it was the finest statue in the world. "Well, sir," says the member of Congress, "but you must remember that Mr. M—— had never seen a statue when he made this!" I suggested that to see other statues might do Mr. M—— no harm. Nor was any man more willing to own his defects, or more modest regarding his merits, than the sculptor himself, whom I met subsequently. But oh! what a charming article there was in a Washington paper next day about the impertinence of criticism and offensive tone of arrogance which Englishmen adopted towards men and works of genius in America! "Who was this man, who" &c. &c.? The Washington writer was angry because I would not accept this American claret as the finest port-wine in the world. Ah me! It is about blood and not wine that the quarrel now is, and who shall foretell its end?

How much claret that would be port if it could be handed about in every society! In the House of Commons what small-beer orators try to pass for strong? Stay: have I a spite against any one? It is a fact that the wife of the Member for Bungay has left off asking me and Mrs. Roundabout to her

evening-parties. Now is the time to have a slap at him. I will say that he was always overrated, and that now he is lamentably falling off even from what he has been. I will back the Member for Stoke Poges against him; and show that the dashing young Member for Islington is a far sounder man than either. Have I any little literary animosities? Of course not. Men of letters never have. Otherwise, how I could serve out a competitor here, make a face over his works, and show that his would-be port is very meagre ordinaire indeed! Nonsense, man! Why so squeamish? Do they spare *you*? Now you have the whip in your hand, won't you lay on? You used to be a pretty whip enough as a young man, and liked it too. Is there no enemy who would be the better for a little thonging? No. I have militated in former times, not without glory; but I grow peaceable as I grow old. And if I have a literary enemy, why, he will probably write a book ere long, and then it will be *his* turn, and my favourite review will be down upon him.

My brethren, these sermons are professedly short; for I have that opinion of my dear congregation, which leads me to think that were I to preach at great length they would yawn, stamp, make noises, and perhaps go straightway out of church; and yet with this text I protest I could go on for hours.

What multitudes of men, what multitudes of women, my dears, pass off their ordinaire for port, their small beer for strong! In literature, in politics, in the army, the navy, the church, at the bar, in the world, what an immense quantity of cheap liquor is made to do service for better sorts! Ask Serjeant Roland his opinion of Oliver Q.C. "Ordinaire, my good fellow, ordinaire, with a port-wine label!" Ask Oliver his opinion of Roland. "Never was a man so overrated by the world and by himself." Ask Tweedledumski his opinion of Tweedledeestein's performance, "A quack, my tear sir! an ignoramus, I geef you my vort? He gombosse an opera! He is not fit to make dance a bear!" Ask Paddington and Buckmister, those two "swells" of fashion, what they think of each other? They are notorious ordinaire. You and I remember when they passed for very small wine, and now how high and mighty they have become. What do you say to Tomkins' sermons? Ordinaire, trying to go down as orthodox port, and very meagre ordinaire too! To Hopkins' historical works?—to Pumkins' poetry? Ordinaire, ordinaire again—thin, feeble, overrated; and so down the whole list. And when we have done discussing our men friends, have we not all the women? Do these not advance absurd pretensions? Do these never give themselves airs? With feeble brains, don't

they often set up to be *esprits forts*? Don't they pretend to be women of fashion, and cut their betters? Don't they try and pass off their ordinary-looking girls as beauties of the first order? Every man in his circle knows women who give themselves airs, and to whom we can apply the port-wine simile.

Come, my friends. Here is enough of ordinaire and port for to-day. My bottle has run out. Will anybody have any more? Let us go upstairs, and get a cup of tea from the ladies.

O G R E S.

I DARE SAY the reader has remarked that the upright and independent vowel, which stands in the vowel-list between E and O, has formed the subject of the main part of these essays. How does that vowel feel this morning?—fresh, good-humoured, and lively? The Roundabout lines, which fall from this pen, are correspondingly brisk and cheerful. Has anything, on the contrary, disagreed with the vowel? Has its rest been disturbed, or was yesterday's dinner too good, or yesterday's wine not good enough? Under such circumstances, a darkling, misanthropic tinge, no doubt, is cast upon the paper. The jokes, if attempted, are elaborate and dreary. The bitter temper breaks out. That sneering manner is adopted, which you know,

and which exhibits itself so especially when the writer is speaking about women. A moody carelessness comes over him. He sees no good in anybody or thing: and treats gentlemen, ladies, history, and things in general, with a like gloomy flippancy. Agreed. When the vowel in question is in that mood, if you like airy gaiety and tender gushing benevolence—if you want to be satisfied with yourself and the rest of your fellow-beings; I recommend you, my dear creature, to go to some other shop in Cornhill, or turn to some other article. There are moods in the mind of the vowel of which we are speaking, when it is ill conditioned and captious. Who always keeps good health, and good humour? Do not philosophers grumble? Are not sages sometimes out of temper? and do not angel-women go off in tantrums? To-day my mood is dark. I scowl as I dip my pen in the inkstand.

Here is the day come round—for everything here is done with the utmost regularity:—intellectual labour, sixteen hours; meals, thirty-two minutes; exercise, a hundred and forty-eight minutes; conversation with the family, chiefly literary, and about the housekeeping, one hour and four minutes; sleep, three hours and fifteen minutes (at the end of the month, when the Magazine is complete, I own I take eight minutes more); and the rest for the

toilette and the world. Well, I say, the *Roundabout Paper Day* being come, and the subject long since settled in my mind, an excellent subject—a most telling, lively, and popular subject—I go to breakfast determined to finish that meal in $9\frac{3}{4}$ minutes, as usual, and then retire to my desk and work, when—oh, provoking!—here in the paper is the very subject treated, on which I was going to write! Yesterday another paper which I saw treated it—and of course, as I need not tell you, spoiled it. Last Saturday, another paper had an article on the subject; perhaps you may guess what it was—but I won't tell you. Only this is true, my favourite subject, which was about to make the best paper we have had for a long time: my bird, my game that I was going to shoot and serve up with such a delicate sauce, has been found by other sportsmen; and pop, pop, pop, a half-dozen of guns have banged at it, mangled it, and brought it down.

“And can't you take some other text?” say you. All this is mighty well. But if you have set your heart on a certain dish for dinner, be it cold boiled veal, or what you will, and they bring you turtle and venison, don't you feel disappointed? During your walk you have been making up your mind that that cold meat, with moderation and a pickle, will be a very sufficient dinner: you have accustomed

your thoughts to it; and here, in place of it, is a turkey, surrounded by coarse sausages, or a reeking pigeon-pie or a fulsome roast-pig. I have known many a good and kind man made furiously angry by such a *contretemps*. I have known him lose his temper, call his wife and servants names, and a whole household made miserable. If, then, as is notoriously the case, it is too dangerous to baulk a man about his dinner, how much more about his article? I came to my meal with an ogre-like appetite and gusto. Fee, faw, fum! Wife, where is that tender little Princekin? Have you trussed him, and did you stuff him nicely, and have you taken care to baste him and do him, not too brown, as I told you? Quick! I am hungry! I begin to whet my knife, to roll my eyes about, and roar and clap my huge chest like a gorilla; and then my poor Ogrina has to tell me that the little princes have all run away, whilst she was in the kitchen, making the paste to bake them in! I pause in the description. I won't condescend to report the bad language, which you know must ensue, when an ogre, whose mind is ill regulated, and whose habits of self-indulgence are notorious, finds himself disappointed of his greedy hopes. What treatment of his wife, what abuse and brutal behaviour to his children, who, though ogrillons, are children! My dears, you

may fancy, and need not ask my delicate pen to describe, the language and behaviour of a vulgar, coarse, greedy, large man with an immense mouth and teeth, which are too frequently employed in the gobbling and crunching of raw man's meat.

And in this circuitous way you see I have reached my present subject, which is, Ogres. You fancy they are dead or only fictitious characters—mythical representatives of strength, cruelty, stupidity, and lust for blood? Though they had seven-leagued boots, you remember all sorts of little whipping-snapping Tom Thumbs used to elude and outrun them. They were so stupid that they gave into the most shallow ambushes and artifices: witness that well-known ogre, who, because Jack cut open the hasty-pudding, instantly ripped open his own stupid waistcoat and interior. They were cruel, brutal, disgusting, with their sharpened teeth, immense knives, and roaring voices! but they always ended by being overcome by little Tom Thumbkins, or some other smart little champion.

Yes; they were conquered in the end there is no doubt. They plunged headlong (and uttering the most frightful bad language) into some pit where Jack came with his smart *couteau de chasse* and whipped their brutal heads off. They would be going to devour maidens,

“But ever when it seemed
Their need was at the sorest,
A knight, in armour bright,
Came riding through the forest.”

And down, after a combat, would go the brutal persecutor, with a lance through his midriff. Yes, I say, this is very true and well. But you remember that round the ogre's cave the ground was covered, for hundreds and hundreds of yards, *with the bones of the victims* whom he had lured into the castle. Many knights and maids came to him and perished under his knife and teeth. Were dragons the same as ogres? monsters dwelling in caverns, whence they rushed, attired in plate armour, wielding pikes and torches, and destroying stray passengers who passed by their lair? Monsters, brutes, rapacious tyrants, ruffians, as they were, doubtless they ended by being overcome. But, before they were destroyed, they did a deal of mischief. The bones round their caves were countless. They had sent many brave souls to Hades, before their own fled, howling out of their rascal carcasses, to the same place of gloom.

There is no greater mistake than to suppose that fairies, champions, distressed damsels, and by consequence ogres, have ceased to exist. It may not be *ogreable* to them (pardon the horrible pleasantry,

but as I am writing in the solitude of my chamber, I am grinding my teeth—yelling, roaring, and cursing—brandishing my scissors and paper-cutter, and as it were, have become an ogre). I say there is no greater mistake than to suppose that ogres have ceased to exist. We all *know* ogres. Their caverns are round us, and about us. There are the castles of several ogres within a mile of the spot where I write. I think some of them suspect I am an ogre myself. I am not: but I know they are. I visit them. I don't mean to say that they take a cold roast prince out of the cupboard, and have a cannibal feast before *me*. But I see the bones lying about the roads to their houses, and in the areas and gardens. Politeness, of course, prevents me from making any remarks; but I know them well enough. One of the ways to know 'em is to watch the scared looks of the ogres' wives and children. They lead an awful life. They are present at dreadful cruelties. In their excesses those ogres will stab about, and kill not only strangers who happen to call in and ask a night's lodging, but they will outrage, murder, and chop up their own kin. We all know ogres, I say, and have been in their dens often. It is not necessary that ogres who ask you to dine should offer their guests the *peculiar dish* which they like. They cannot always get a

Tom Thumb family. They eat mutton and beef too; and I dare say even go out to tea, and invite you to drink it. But I tell you there are numbers of them going about in the world. And now you have my word for it, and this little hint, it is quite curious what an interest society may be made to have for you, by your determining to find out the ogres you meet there.

What does the man mean? says Mrs. Downright, to whom a joke is a very grave thing. I mean, madam, that in the company assembled in your genteel drawing-room, who bow here and there and smirk in white neckcloths, you receive men who elbow through life successfully enough, but who are ogres in private: men wicked, false, rapacious, flattering; cruel hectors at home, smiling courtiers abroad; causing wives, children, servants, parents, to tremble before them, and smiling and bowing as they bid strangers welcome into their castles. I say, there are men who have crunched the bones of victim after victim; in whose closets lie skeletons picked frightfully clean. When these ogres come out into the world, you don't suppose they show their knives, and their great teeth? A neat simple white neckcloth, a merry rather obsequious manner, a cadaverous look, perhaps, now and again, and a rather dreadful grin; but I know ogres very con-

siderably respected: and when you hint to such and such a man, "My dear sir, Mr. Sharpus, whom you appear to like, is, I assure you, a most dreadful cannibal;" the gentleman cries, "Oh, psha, nonsense! Dare say not so black as he is painted. Dare say not worse than his neighbours." We condone everything in this country—private treason, falsehood, flattery, cruelty at home, roguery, and double dealing. What! Do you mean to say in your acquaintance you don't know ogres guilty of countless crimes of fraud and force, and that knowing them you don't shake hands with them; dine with them at your table; and meet them at their own? Depend upon it, in the time when there were real live ogres in real caverns or castles, gobbling up real knights and virgins, when they went into the world—the neighbouring market-town, let us say, or earl's castle—though their nature and reputation were pretty well known, their notorious foibles were never alluded to. You would say, "What, Blunderbore, my boy! How do you do? How well and fresh you look! What's the receipt you have for keeping so young and rosy?" And your wife would softly ask after Mrs. Blunderbore and the dear children. Or it would be, "My dear Humguffin! try that pork. It is home-bred, home-fed, and, I promise you, tender. Tell me if you think it is as

good as yours? John, a glass of Burgundy to Colonel Humguffin!" You don't suppose there would be any unpleasant allusions to disagreeable home-reports regarding Humguffin's manner of furnishing his larder? I say we all of us know ogres. We shake hands and dine with ogres. And if inconvenient moralists tell us we are cowards for our pains, we turn round with a *tu quoque*, or say that we don't meddle with other folk's affairs; that people are much less black than they are painted, and so on. What! Won't half the county go to Ogreham Castle? Won't some of the clergy say grace at dinner? Won't the mothers bring their daughters to dance with the young Rawheads? And if Lady Ogreham happens to die—I won't say to go the way of all flesh, that is too revolting—I say if Ogreham is a widower, do you aver, on your conscience and honour, that mothers will not be found to offer their young girls to supply the lamented lady's place? How stale this misanthropy is! Something must have disagreed with this cynic. Yes, my good woman. I dare say you would like to call another subject. Yes, my fine fellow; ogre at home, supple as a dancing-master abroad, and shaking in thy pumps, and wearing a horrible grin of sham gaiety to conceal thy terror, lest I should point thee out;—thou art prosperous and honoured, art

thou? I say thou hast been a tyrant and a robber. Thou hast plundered the poor. Thou hast bullied the weak. Thou hast laid violent hands on the goods of the innocent and confiding. Thou hast made a prey of the meek and gentle who asked for thy protection. Thou hast been hard to thy kinsfolk, and cruel to thy family. Go, monster! Ah, when shall little Jack come and drill daylight through thy wicked cannibal carcass? I see the ogre pass on, bowing right and left to the company; and he gives a dreadful sidelong glance of suspicion as he is talking to my lord bishop in the corner there.

Ogres in our days need not be giants at all. In former times, and in children's books, where it is necessary to paint your moral in such large letters that there can be no mistake about it, ogres are made with that enormous mouth and *ratelier* which you know of, and with which they can swallow down a baby, almost without using that great knife which they always carry. They are too cunning now-a-days. They go about in society, slim, small, quietly dressed, and showing no especially great appetite. In my own young days there used to be play ogres—men who would devour a young fellow in one sitting, and leave him without a bit of flesh on his bones. They were quiet gentlemanlike-looking people. They got the young fellow into their cave. Champagne,

pâté-de-foie-gras, and numberless good things, were handed about; and then, having eaten, the young man was devoured in his turn. I believe these card and dice ogres have died away almost as entirely as the hasty-pudding giants whom Tom Thumb overcame. Now, there are ogres in City courts who lure you into their dens. About our Cornish mines I am told there are many most plausible ogres, who tempt you into their caverns and pick your bones there. In a certain newspaper there used to be lately a whole column of advertisements from ogres who would put on the most plausible, nay, piteous appearance, in order to inveigle their victims. You would read, "A tradesman, established for seventy years in the City, and known, and much respected by Messrs. N. M. Rothschild and Baring Brothers, has pressing need for three pounds until next Saturday. He can give security for half a million, and forty thousand pounds will be given for the use of the loan," and so on; or, "An influential body of capitalists are about to establish a company, of which the business will be enormous and the profits proportionately prodigious. They will require A SECRETARY, of good address and appearance, at a salary of two thousand per annum. He need not be able to write, but address and manners are absolutely necessary. As a mark of confidence in the company, he will

have to deposit," &c.; or, "A young widow (of pleasing manners and appearance) who has a pressing necessity for four pounds ten for three weeks, offers her Erard's grand piano valued at three hundred guineas; a diamond cross of eight hundred pounds; and board and lodging in her elegant villa near Banbury Cross, with the best references and society, in return for the loan." I suspect these people are ogres. There are ogres and ogres. Polyphemus was a great, tall, one-eyed, notorious ogre, fetching his victims out of a hole, and gobbling them one after another. There could be no mistake about him. But so were the Sirens ogres—pretty blue-eyed things, peeping at you coaxingly from out of the water, and singing their melodious wheedles. And the bones round their caves were more numerous than the ribs, skulls, and thigh-bones round the cavern of hulking Polypheme.

To the castle-gates of some of these monsters up rides the dapper champion of the pen; puffs boldly upon the horn which hangs by the chain; enters the hall resolutely, and challenges the big tyrant sulking within. We defy him to combat, the enormous roaring ruffian! We give him a meeting on the green plain before his castle. Green? No wonder it should be green: it is manured with human bones. After a few graceful wheels and curvets, we take

our ground. We stoop over our saddle. 'Tis but to kiss the locket of our lady-love's hair. And now the vizor is up: the lance is in rest (Gillott's iron is the point for me). A touch of the spur in the gallant sides of Pegasus, and we gallop at the great brute.

"Cut off his ugly head, Flibbertygibbet, my squire!" And who are these who pour out of the castle? the imprisoned maidens, the maltreated widows, the poor old hoary grandfathers, who have been locked up in the dungeons these scores and scores of years, writhing under that ruffian! Ah ye knights of the pen! May honour be your shield, and truth tip your lances! Be gentle to all gentle people. Be modest to women. Be tender to children. And as for the Ogre Humbug, out sword, and have at him.

ON TWO ROUNDABOUT PAPERS WHICH I
INTENDED TO WRITE.*

WE have all heard of a place paved with good intentions:—a place which I take to be a very dismal, useless and unsatisfactory terminus for many pleasant thoughts, kindly fancies, gentle wishes, merry little quips and pranks, harmless jokes which die as it were the moment of their birth. Poor little children of the brain! He was a dreary theologian who huddled you under such a melancholy cenotaph, and laid you in the vaults under the flagstones of Hades! I trust that some of the best actions we

* The following paper was written in 1861, after the extraordinary affray between Major Murray and the money-lender in a house in Northumberland Street, Strand, and subsequent to the appearance of M. Du Chaillu's book on Gorillas.

have all of us committed in our lives have been committed in fancy. It is not all wickedness we are thinking, *que diable!* Some of our thoughts are bad enough I grant you. Many a one you and I have had here below. Ah mercy, what a monster! what crooked horns! what leering eyes! what a flaming mouth! what cloven feet, and what a hideous writhing tail! Oh, let us fall down on our knees, repeat our most potent exorcisms, and overcome the brute. Spread your black pinions, fly—fly to the dusky realms of Eblis, and bury thyself under the paving-stones of his hall, dark genie! But *all* thoughts are not so. No—no. There are the pure: there are the kind: there are the gentle. There are sweet unspoken thanks before a fair scene of nature: at a sun-setting below a glorious sea; or a moon and a host of stars shining over it: at a bunch of children playing in the street, or a group of flowers by the hedge-side, or a bird singing there. At a hundred moments or occurrences of the day good thoughts pass through the mind, let us trust, which never are spoken; prayers are made which never are said; and *Te Deum* is sung without church, clerk, choristers, parson, or organ. Why, there's my enemy: who got the place I wanted; who maligned me to the woman I wanted to be well with; who supplanted me in the good graces of my patron. I don't say

anything about the matter: but, my poor old enemy, in my secret mind I have movements of as tender charity towards you, you old scoundrel, as ever I had when we were boys together at school. You ruffian! do you fancy I forget that we were fond of each other? We are still. We share our toffy; go halves at the tuck-shop; do each other's exercises; prompt each other with the word in construing or repetition; and tell the most frightful fibs to prevent each other from being found out. We meet each other in public. Ware a fight! Get them into different parts of the room! Our friends hustle round us. Capulet and Montague are not more at odds than the houses of Roundabout and Wrightabout, let us say. It is, "My dear Mrs. Buffer, do kindly put yourself in the chair between those two men!" Or, "My dear Wrightabout, will you take that charming Lady Blancmange down to supper? She adores your poems; and gave five shillings for your autograph at the fancy fair." In like manner the peace-makers gather round Roundabout on his part: he is carried to a distant corner, and coaxed out of the way of the enemy with whom he is at feud.

When we meet in the Square at Verona, out flash rapiers, and we fall to. But in his private mind Tybalt owns that Mercutio has a rare wit, and

Mercutio is sure that his adversary is a gallant gentleman. Look at the amphitheatre yonder. You do not suppose those gladiators who fought and perished, as hundreds of spectators in that grim Circus held thumbs down, and cried, "Kill, kill!"—you do not suppose the combatants of necessity hated each other? No more than the celebrated trained bands of literary sword-and-buckler men hate the adversaries whom they meet in the arena. They engage at the given signal; feint and parry; slash, poke, rip each other open, dismember limbs, and hew off noses: but in the way of business, and, I trust, with mutual private esteem. For instance, I salute the warriors of the Superfine Company with the honours due among warriors. Here's at you, Spartacus, my lad. A hit, I acknowledge. A palpable hit! Ha! how do you like that poke in the eye in return? When the trumpets sing truce, or the spectators are tired, we bow to the noble company: withdraw; and get a cool glass of wine in our *rendezvous des braves gladiateurs*.

By the way, I saw that amphitheatre of Verona under the strange light of a lurid eclipse some years ago: and I have been there in spirit for these twenty lines past, under a vast gusty awning, now with twenty thousand fellow-citizens looking on from the benches, now in the circus itself, a grim gladiator

with sword and net, or a meek martyr—was I?—brought out to be gobbled up by the lions? or a huge, shaggy, tawny lion myself, on whom the dogs were going to be set? What a day of excitement I have had to be sure! But I must get away from Verona, or who knows how much farther the Roundabout Pegasus may carry me?

We were saying, my Muse, before we dropped and perched on earth for a couple of sentences, that our unsaid words were in some limbo or other, as real as those we have uttered; that the thoughts which have passed through our brains are as actual as any to which our tongues and pens have given currency. For instance, besides what is here hinted at, I have thought ever so much more about Verona: about an early Christian church I saw there; about a great dish of rice we had at the inn; about the bugs there; about ever so many more details of that day's journey from Milan to Venice; about lake Garda, which lay on the way from Milan, and so forth. I say what fine things we have thought of, haven't we, all of us? Ah, what a fine tragedy that was I thought of, and never wrote! On the day of the dinner of the Oystermongers' Company, what a noble speech I thought of in the cab, and broke down—I don't mean the cab, but the speech. Ah, if you could but read some of the unwritten

Roundabout Papers—how you would be amused! Aha! my friend, I catch you saying, “Well, then, I wish *this* was unwritten with all my heart.” Very good. I owe you one. I do confess a hit, a palpable hit.

One day in the past month, as I was reclining on the bench of thought, with that ocean *The Times* newspaper spread before me, the ocean cast up on the shore at my feet two famous subjects for Roundabout Papers, and I picked up those waifs, and treasured them away until I could polish them and bring them to market. That scheme is not to be carried out. I can't write about those subjects. And though I cannot write about them, I may surely tell what are the subjects I am going *not* to write about.

The first was that Northumberland Street encounter, which all the papers have narrated. Have any novelists of our days a scene and catastrophe more strange and terrible than this which occurs at noonday within a few yards of the greatest thoroughfare in Europe? At the theatres they have a new name for their melodramatic pieces, and call them “Sensation Dramas.” What a sensation Drama this is! What have people been flocking to see at the Adelphi Theatre for the last hundred and fifty nights?

A woman pitched overboard out of a boat, and a certain Miles taking a tremendous "header," and bringing her to shore? Bagatelle! What is this compared to the real life-drama, of which a midday representation takes place just opposite the Adelphi in Northumberland Street? The brave Dumas, the intrepid Ainsworth, the terrible Eugene Sue, the cold-shudder-inspiring "Woman in White," the astounding author of the "Mysteries of the Court of London," never invented anything more tremendous than this. It might have happened to you and me. We want to borrow a little money. We are directed to an agent. We propose a pecuniary transaction at a short date. He goes into the next room, as we fancy, to get the bank-notes, and returns with "two very pretty, delicate little ivory-handled pistols," and blows a portion of our heads off. After this, what is the use of being squeamish about the probabilities and possibilities in the writing of fiction? Years ago I remember making merry over a play of Dumas, called *Kean*, in which the "Coal-Hole Tavern" was represented on the Thames, with a fleet of pirate-ships moored alongside. Pirate-ships? Why not? What a cavern of terror was this in Northumberland Street, with its splendid furniture covered with dust, its empty bottles, in the midst of which sits a grim "agent," amusing himself by firing

pistols, aiming at the unconscious mantelpiece, or at the heads of his customers!

After this, what is not possible? It is possible Hungerford Market is mined, and will explode some day. Mind how you go in for a penny ice un-awares. "Pray, step this way," says a quiet person at the door. You enter—into a back room:—a quiet room; rather a dark room. "Pray, take your place in a chair." And she goes to fetch the penny ice. *Malheureux!* The chair sinks down with you—sinks, and sinks, and sinks—a large wet flannel suddenly envelopes your face and throttles you. Need we say any more? After Northumberland Street, what is improbable? Surely there is no difficulty in crediting Bluebeard. I withdraw my last month's opinions about ogres. Ogres? Why not? I protest I have seldom contemplated anything more terribly ludicrous than this "agent" in the dingy splendour of his den, surrounded by dusty ormolu and piles of empty bottles, firing pistols for his diversion at the mantelpiece until his clients come in! Is pistol-practice so common in Northumberland Street, that it passes without notice in the lodging-houses there?

We spake anon of good thoughts. About bad thoughts? Is there some Northumberland Street chamber in your heart and mine, friend: close to

the every-day street of life: visited by daily friends: visited by people on business; in which affairs are transacted; jokes are uttered; wine is drunk; through which people come and go; wives and children pass; and in which murder sits unseen until the terrible moment when he rises up and kills? A farmer, say, has a gun over the mantelpiece in his room where he sits at his daily meals and rest: caressing his children, joking with his friends, smoking his pipe in his calm. One night the gun is taken down: the farmer goes out: and it is a murderer who comes back and puts the piece up and drinks by that fire-side. Was he a murderer yesterday when he was tossing the baby on his knee, and when his hands were playing with his little girl's yellow hair? Yesterday there was no blood on them at all: they were shaken by honest men: have done many a kind act in their time very likely. He leans his head on one of them, the wife comes in with her anxious looks of welcome, the children are prattling as they did yesterday round the father's knee at the fire, and Cain is sitting by the embers, and Abel lies dead on the moor. Think of the gulf between now and yesterday. Oh, yesterday! Oh, the days when those two loved each other and said their prayers side by side! He goes to sleep, perhaps, and dreams that his brother is alive. Be true,

O dream! Let him live in dreams, and wake no more. Be undone, O crime, O crime! But the sun rises: and the officers of conscience come: and yonder lies the body on the moor. I happened to pass, and looked at the Northumberland Street house the other day. A few loiterers were gazing up at the dingy windows. A plain ordinary face of a house enough—and in a chamber in it one man suddenly rose up, pistol in hand, to slaughter another. Have you ever killed any one in your thoughts? Has your heart compassed any man's death? In your mind, have you ever taken a brand from the altar, and slain your brother? How many plain ordinary faces of men do we look at, unknowing of murder behind those eyes? Lucky for you and me, brother, that we have good thoughts unspoken. But the bad ones? I tell you that the sight of those blank windows in Northumberland Street—through which, as it were, my mind could picture the awful tragedy glimmering behind—set me thinking, "Mr. Street-Preacher, here is a text for one of your pavement sermons. But it is too glum and serious. You eschew dark thoughts: and desire to be cheerful and merry in the main." And, such being the case, you see we must have no Roundabout Essay on this subject.

Well, I had another arrow in my quiver. (So,

you know, had William Tell a bolt for his son, the apple of his eye; and a shaft for Gessler, in case William came to any trouble with the first poor little target.) And this, I must tell you, was to have been a rare Roundabout performance—one of the very best that has ever appeared in this series. It was to have contained all the deep pathos of Addison; the logical precision of Rabelais; the child-like playfulness of Swift; the manly stoicism of Sterne; the metaphysical depth of Goldsmith; the blushing modesty of Fielding; the epigrammatic terseness of Walter Scott; the uproarious humour of Sam Richardson; and the gay simplicity of Sam Johnson;—it was to have combined all these qualities, with some excellences of modern writers whom I could name:—but circumstances have occurred which have rendered this Roundabout Essay also impossible.

I have not the least objection to tell you what was to have been the subject of that other admirable Roundabout Paper. Gracious powers! the Dean of St. Patrick's never had a better theme. The paper was to have been on the Gorillas, to be sure. I was going to imagine myself to be a young surgeon-apprentice from Charleston, in South Carolina, who ran away to Cuba on account of unhappy family circumstances, with which nobody has the least con-

cern; who sailed thence to Africa in a large, roomy schooner with an extraordinary vacant space between decks. I was subject to dreadful ill treatment from the first mate of the ship, who, when I found she was a slaver, altogether declined to put me on shore. I was chased—we were chased—by three British frigates and a seventy-four, which we engaged and captured; but were obliged to scuttle and sink, as we could sell them in no African port: and I never shall forget the look of manly resignation, combined with considerable disgust, of the British Admiral as he walked the plank, after cutting off his pigtail, which he handed to me, and which I still have in charge for his family at Boston, Lincolnshire, England.

We made the port of Bpoopoo, at the confluence of the Bungo and Sgglolo rivers (which you may see in Swammerdahl's map) on the 31st April last year. Our passage had been so extraordinarily rapid, owing to the continued drunkenness of the captain and chief officers, by which I was obliged to work the ship and take her in command, that we reached Bpoopoo six weeks before we were expected, and five before the coffres from the interior and from the great slave depôt at Zbabblo were expected. Their delay caused us not a little discomfort, because, though we had taken the four Eng-

lish ships, we knew that Sir Byam Martin's iron-cased squadron, with the "Warrior," the "Impregnable," the "Sanconiathon," and the "Berosus," were cruising in the neighbourhood, and might prove too much for us.

It not only became necessary to quit Bpooopoo before the arrival of the British fleet or the rainy season, but to get our people on board as soon as might be. While the chief mate, with a detachment of seamen, hurried forward to the Pgogo lake, where we expected a considerable part of our cargo, the second mate, with six men, four chiefs, King Fbumbo, an Obi man, and myself, went N.W. by W., towards King Mtoby's-town, where we knew many hundreds of our between-deck passengers were to be got together. We went down the Pdodo river, shooting snipes, ostriches, and rhinoceros in plenty, and I think a few elephants, until, by the advice of a guide, who I now believe was treacherous, we were induced to leave the Pdodo, and march N.E. by N.N. Here Lieutenant Larkins, who had persisted in drinking rum from morning to night, and thrashing me in his sober moments during the whole journey, died, and I have too good reason to know was eaten with much relish by the natives. At Mgoo, where there are barracoons and a depôt for our cargo, we had no news of our expected freight;

accordingly, as time pressed exceedingly, parties were despatched in advance towards the great Washaboo lake, by which the caravans usually come towards the coast. Here we found no caravan, but only four negroes down with the ague, whom I treated, I am bound to say, unsuccessfully, whilst we waited for our friends. We used to take watch and watch in front of the place, both to guard ourselves from attack, and get early news of the approaching caravan.

At last, on the 23rd September, as I was in advance with Charles Rogers, second mate, and two natives with bows and arrows, we were crossing a great plain skirted by a forest, when we saw emerging from a ravine what I took to be three negroes—a very tall one, one of a moderate size, and one quite little.

Our native guides shrieked out some words in their language, of which Charles Rogers knew something. I thought it was the advance of the negroes whom we expected. "No!" said Rogers (who swore dreadfully in conversation), "it is the Gorillas!" And he fired both barrels of his gun, bringing down the little one first, and the female afterwards.

The male, who was untouched, gave a howl that you might have heard a league off; advanced

towards us as if he would attack us, and then turned and ran away with inconceivable celerity towards the wood.

We went up towards the fallen brutes. The little one by the female appeared to be about two years old. It lay bleating and moaning on the ground, stretching out its little hands, with movements and looks so strangely resembling human, that my heart sickened with pity. The female, who had been shot through both legs, could not move. She howled most hideously when I approached the little one.

"We must be off," said Rogers, "or the whole Gorilla race may be down upon us." "The little one is only shot in the leg," I said. "I'll bind the limb up, and we will carry the beast with us on board."

The poor little wretch held up its leg to show it was wounded, and looked to me with appealing eyes. It lay quite still whilst I looked for and found the bullet, and, tearing off a piece of my shirt, bandaged up the wound. I was so occupied in this business, that I hardly heard Rogers cry "Run! run!" and when I looked up——

When I looked up, with a roar the most horrible I ever heard—a roar? ten thousand roars—a

whirling army of dark beings rushed by me. Rogers, who had bullied me so frightfully during the voyage, and who had encouraged my fatal passion for play, so that I own I owed him 1,500 dollars, was overtaken, felled, brained, and torn into ten thousand pieces; and I dare say the same fate would have fallen on me, but that the little Gorilla, whose wound I had dressed, flung its arms round my neck (their arms, you know, are much longer than ours). And when an immense grey Gorilla, with hardly any teeth, brandishing the trunk of a gollyboshtree about sixteen feet long, came up to me roaring, the little one squeaked out something plaintive, which, of course, I could not understand; on which suddenly the monster flung down his tree, squatted down on his huge hams by the side of the little patient, and began to bellow and weep.

And now, do you see whom I had rescued? I had rescued the young Prince of the Gorillas, who was out walking with his nurse and footman. The footman had run off to alarm his master, and certainly I never saw a footman run quicker. The whole army of Gorillas rushed forward to rescue their prince, and punish his enemies. If the King Gorilla's emotion was great, fancy what the queen's must have been when *she* came up! She arrived, on a litter, neatly enough made with wattled

branches, on which she lay, with her youngest child, a prince of three weeks old.

My little *protégé*, with the wounded leg, still persisted in hugging me with its arms (I think I mentioned that they are longer than those of men in general), and as the poor little brute was immensely heavy, and the Gorillas go at a prodigious pace, a litter was made for us likewise; and my thirst much refreshed by a footman (the same domestic who had given the alarm) running hand over hand up a cocoanut-tree, tearing the rinds off, breaking the shell on his head, and handing me the fresh milk in its cup. My little patient partook of a little, stretching out its dear little unwounded foot, with which, or with its hand, a Gorilla can help itself indiscriminately. Relays of large Gorillas relieved each other at the litters at intervals of twenty minutes, as I calculated by my watch, one of Jones and Bates's, of Boston, Mass., though I have been unable to this day to ascertain how these animals calculate time with such surprising accuracy. We slept for that night under——

And now, you see, we arrive at really the most interesting part of my travels in the country which I intended to visit, viz. the manners and habits of the Gorillas *chez eux*. I give the heads of this narrative only, the full account being suppressed for a

reason which shall presently be given. The heads, then, of the chapters, are briefly as follows:—

The author's arrival in the Gorilla country. Its geographical position. Lodgings assigned to him up a gum-tree. Constant attachment of the little prince. His royal highness's gratitude. Anecdotes of his wit, playfulness, and extraordinary precocity. Am offered a portion of poor Larkins for my supper, but decline with horror. Footman brings me a young crocodile: fishy but very palatable. Old crocodiles too tough: ditto rhinoceros. Visit the queen mother—an enormous old Gorilla, quite white. Prescribe for her majesty. Meeting of Gorillas at what appears a parliament amongst them: presided over by old Gorilla in cocoa-nut-fibre wig. Their sports. Their customs. A privileged class amongst them. Extraordinary likeness of Gorillas to people at home, both at Charleston, S. C., my native place; and London, England, which I have visited. Flat-nosed Gorillas and blue-nosed Gorillas; their hatred, and wars between them. In a part of the country (its geographical position described) I see several negroes under Gorilla domination. Well treated by their masters. Frog-eating Gorillas across the Salt Lake. Bull-headed Gorillas—their mutual hostility. Green Island Gorillas. More quarrelsome than the Bull-heads, and howl much louder. I am called to attend one of the princesses. Evident partiality of

H.R.H. for me. Jealousy and rage of large red-headed Gorilla. How shall I escape?

Ay, how indeed? Do you wish to know? Is your curiosity excited? Well, I *do* know how I escaped. I could tell the most extraordinary adventures that happened to me. I could show you resemblances to people at home, that would make them blue with rage and you crack your sides with laughter. . . . And what is the reason I cannot write this paper, having all the facts before me? The reason is, that walking down St. James Street yesterday, I met a friend who says to me, "Round-about my boy, have you seen your picture? Here it is!" And he pulls out a portrait, executed in photography, of your humble servant, as an immense and most unpleasant-featured baboon, with long hairy hands, and called by the waggish artist "A Literary Gorilla." O horror! And now you see why I can't play off this joke myself, and moralize on the fable, as it has been narrated already *de me*.

A MISSISSIPPI BUBBLE.

I ONCE sketched a group of dusky children of the captivity during one of my round-about journeys. That drawing was made in a country where there was such hospitality, friendship, kindness shown to the humble designer, that his eyes do not care to look out for faults, or his pen to note them. How they sang; how they laughed and grinned; how they scraped, bowed, and complimented you and each other, those negroes of the cities of the Southern parts of the then United States! My business kept me in the towns; I was but in one negro-plantation village, and there were only women and little children, the men being out a-field. But there was plenty of cheerfulness in the huts, under the great

trees—I speak of what I saw—and amidst the dusky bondsmen of the cities. I witnessed a curious gaiety; heard amongst the black folk endless singing, shouting, and laughter; and saw on holidays black gentlemen and ladies arrayed in such splendour and comfort as freeborn workmen in our towns seldom exhibit. What a grin and bow that dark gentleman performed, who was the porter at the colonel's, when he said, "You write your name, mas'r, else I will forget." I am not going into the slavery question, I am not an advocate for "the institution," as I know, madam, by that angry toss of your head, you are about to declare me to be. For domestic purposes, my dear lady, it seemed to me about the dearest institution that can be devised. In a house in a Southern city you will find fifteen negroes doing the work which John, the cook, the housemaid, and the help, do perfectly in your own comfortable London house. And these fifteen negroes are the pick of a family of some eighty or ninety. Twenty are too sick, or too old for work, let us say: twenty too clumsy: twenty are too young, and have to be nursed and watched by ten more.* And

* This was an account given by a gentleman at Richmond of his establishment. Six European servants would have kept his house and stables well. "His farm," he said, "barely sufficed to maintain the negroes residing on it."

master has to maintain the immense crew to do the work of half-a-dozen willing hands. No, no; let Mitchell, the exile from poor dear enslaved Ireland, wish for a gang of "fat niggers;" I would as soon you should make me a present of a score of Bengal elephants, when I need but a single stout horse to pull my brougham.

How hospitable they were, those Southern men! In the North itself the welcome was not kinder, as I, who have eaten Northern and Southern salt, can testify. As for New Orleans, in spring-time,—just when the orchards were flushing over with peach-blossoms, and the sweet herbs came to flavour the juleps—it seemed to me the city of the world where you can eat and drink the most and suffer the least. At Bordeaux itself, claret is not better to drink than at New Orleans. It was all good—believe an expert Robert—from the half-dollar Médoc of the public hotel table, to the private gentleman's choicest wine. Claret is, somehow, good in that gifted place at dinner, at supper, and at breakfast in the morning. It is good: it is superabundant—and there is nothing to pay. Find me speaking ill of such a country! When I do, *pone me pigris campis*: smother me in a desert, or let Mississippi or Garonne drown me! At that comfortable tavern on Pontchartrain we had a *bouillabaisse* than which a better was never eaten

at Marseilles: and not the least headache in the morning, I give you my word; on the contrary, you only wake with a sweet refreshing thirst for claret and water. They say there is fever there in the autumn: but not in the spring-time, when the peach-blossoms blush over the orchards, and the sweet herbs come to flavour the juleps.

I was bound from New Orleans to Saint Louis; and our walk was constantly on the Levee, whence we could see a hundred of those huge white Mississippi steamers at their moorings in the river: "Look," said my friend Lochlomond to me, as we stood one day on the quay—"look at that post! Look at that coffee-house behind it! Sir, last year a steamer blew up in the river yonder, just where you see those men pulling off in the boat. By that post where you are standing a mule was cut in two by a fragment of the burst machinery, and a bit of the chimney-stove in that first-floor window of the coffee-house, killed a negro who was cleaning knives in the top-room!" I looked at the post, at the coffee-house window, at the steamer in which I was going to embark, at my friend, with a pleasing interest not divested of melancholy. Yesterday, it was the mule, thinks I, who was cut in two: it may be *cras mihi*. Why, in the same little sketch-book, there is a drawing of an Alabama river steamer which blew

up on the very next voyage after that in which your humble servant was on board! Had I but waited another week, I might have. . . . These incidents give a queer zest to the voyage down the life-stream in America. When our huge, tall, white, paste-board castle of a steamer began to work up stream, every limb in her creaked, and groaned, and quivered, so that you might fancy she would burst right off. Would she hold together, or would she split into ten million of shivers? O my home and children! Would your humble servant's body be cut in two across yonder chain on the Levee, or be precipitated into yonder first-floor, so as to damage the chest of a black man cleaning boots at the window? The black man is safe for me, thank goodness. But you see the little accident *might* have happened. It has happened; and if to a mule, why not to a more docile animal? On our journey up the Mississippi, I give you my honour we were on fire three times, and burned our cook-room down. The deck at night was a great firework—the chimney spouted myriads of stars, which fell blackening on our garments, sparkling on to the deck, or gleaming into the mighty stream through which we laboured—the mighty yellow stream with all its snags.

How I kept up my courage through these dangers shall now be narrated. The excellent landlord of

the "Saint Charles Hotel," when I was going away, begged me to accept two bottles of the very finest Cognac, with his compliments; and I found them in my state-room with my luggage. Lochlomond came to see me off, and as he squeezed my hand at parting, "Roundabout," says he, "the wine mayn't be very good on board, so I have brought a dozen-case of the Médoc which you liked;" and we grasped together the hands of friendship and farewell. Whose boat is this pulling up to the ship? It is our friend Glenlivat, who gave us the dinner on Lake Pontchartrain. "Roundabout," says he, "we have tried to do what we could for you, my boy; and it has been done *de bon cœur*" (I detect a kind tremulousness in the good fellow's voice as he speaks). "I say—hem!—the a—the wine isn't too good on board, so I've brought you a dozen of Médoc for your voyage, you know. And God bless you; and when I come to London in May I shall come and see you. Hallo! here's Johnson come to see you off, too!"

As I am a miserable sinner, when Johnson grasped my hand, he said, "Mr. Roundabout, you can't be sure of the wine on board these steamers, so I thought I would bring you a little case of that light claret which you liked at my house." *Et de trois!* No wonder I could face the Mississippi with so much courage supplied to me! Where are you,

honest friends, who gave me of your kindness and your cheer? May I be considerably boiled, blown up, and snagged, if I speak hard words of you. May claret turn sour ere I do!

Mounting the stream it chanced that we had very few passengers. How far is the famous city of Memphis from New Orleans? I do not mean the Egyptian Memphis, but the American Memphis, from which to the American Cairo we slowly toiled up the river—to the American Cairo at the confluence of the Ohio and Mississippi rivers. And at Cairo we parted company from the boat, and from some famous and gifted fellow-passengers who joined us at Memphis, and whose pictures we had seen in many cities of the South. I do not give the names of these remarkable people, unless, by some wondrous chance, in inventing a name I should light upon that real one which some of them bore; but if you please I will say that our fellow-passengers whom we took in at Memphis were no less personages than the Vermont Giant and the famous Bearded Lady of Kentucky and her son. Their pictures I had seen in many cities through which I travelled with my own little performance. I think the Vermont Giant was a trifle taller in his pictures than he was in life (being represented in the former as, at least, some two storeys high): but the lady's prodigious beard

received no more than justice at the hands of the painter; that portion of it which I saw being really most black, rich, and curly—I say the portion of beard, for this modest or prudent woman kept I don't know how much of the beard covered up with a red handkerchief, from which I suppose it only emerged when she went to bed, or when she exhibited it professionally.

The Giant, I must think, was an overrated giant. I have known gentlemen, not in the profession, better made, and I should say taller, than the Vermont gentleman. A strange feeling I used to have at meals; when, on looking round our little society, I saw the Giant, the Bearded Lady of Kentucky, the little Bearded Boy of three years old, the Captain, (this I *think*; but at this distance of time I would not like to make the statement on affidavit,) and the three other passengers, all with their knives in their mouths making play at the dinner—a strange feeling I say it was, and as though I was in a castle of ogres. But, after all, why so squeamish? A few scores of years back, the finest gentlemen and ladies of Europe did the like. Belinda ate with her knife; and Saccharissa had only that weapon, or a two-pronged fork, or a spoon, for her pease. Have you ever looked at Gilray's print of the Prince of Wales, a languid voluptuary, retiring

after his meal, and noted the toothpick which he uses? . . . You are right, madam; I own that the subject is revolting and terrible. I will not pursue it. Only—allow that a gentleman, in a shaky steamboat, on a dangerous river, in a far-off country, which caught fire three times during the voyage—(of course I mean the steamboat, not the country,)—seeing a giant, a voracious supercargo, a bearded lady, and a little boy, not three years of age, with a chin already quite black and curly, all plying their victuals down their throats with their knives—allow, madam, that in such a company a man had a right to feel a little nervous. I don't know whether you have ever remarked the Indian jugglers swallowing their knives, or seen, as I have, a whole table of people performing the same trick, but if you look at their eyes when they do it, I assure you there is a roll in them which is dreadful.

Apart from this usage, which they practise in common with many thousand most estimable citizens, the Vermont gentleman, and the Kentucky whiskered lady—or did I say the reverse?—whichever you like, my dear sir—were quite quiet, modest, unassuming people. She sat working with her needle, if I remember right. He, I suppose, slept in the great cabin, which was seventy feet long at the least, nor, I am bound to say, did I hear in the night any

snore or roar, such as you would fancy ought to accompany the sleep of ogres. Nay, this giant had quite a small appetite, (unless, to be sure, he went forward and ate a sheep or two in private with his horrid knife—oh, the dreadful thought!—but *in public*, I say, he had quite a delicate appetite,) and was also a tea-totaller. I don't remember to have heard the lady's voice, though I might, not unnaturally, have been curious to hear it. Was her voice a deep, rich, magnificent bass; or was it soft, fluty, and mild? I shall never know now. Even if she comes to this country, I shall never go and see her. I *have* seen her, and for nothing.

You would have fancied that, as after all we were only some half-dozen on board, she might have dispensed with her red handkerchief, and talked, and eaten her dinner in comfort: but in covering her chin there was a kind of modesty. That beard was her profession: that beard brought the public to see her: out of her business she wished to put that beard aside as it were: as a barrister would wish to put off his wig. I know some who carry theirs into private life, and who mistake you and me for jury-boxes when they address us: but these are not your modest barristers, not your true gentlemen.

Well, I own I respected the lady for the modesty with which, her public business over, she retired into

private life. She respected her life, and her beard. That beard having done its day's work, she puts it away in a handkerchief; and becomes, as far as in her lies, a private ordinary person. All public men and women of good sense, I should think, have this modesty. When, for instance, in my small way, poor Mrs. Brown comes simpering up to me, with her album in one hand, a pen in the other, and says, "Ho, ho, dear Mr. Roundabout, write us one of your amusing," &c. &c., my beard drops behind my handkerchief instantly. Why am I to wag my chin and grin for Mrs. Brown's good pleasure? My dear madam, I have been making faces all day. It is my profession. I do my comic business with the greatest pains, seriousness, and trouble: and with it make, I hope, a not dishonest livelihood. If you ask Mons. Blondin to tea, you don't have a rope stretched from your garret window to the opposite side of the square, and request Monsieur to take his tea out on the centre of the rope? I lay my hand on this waistcoat, and declare that not once in the course of our voyage together did I allow the Kentucky Giant to suppose I was speculating on his stature, or the Bearded Lady to surmise that I wished to peep under the handkerchief which muffled the lower part of her face.

"And the more fool you," says some cynic.

(Faugh, those cynics, I hate 'em!) Don't you know, sir, that a man of genius is pleased to have his genius recognized; that a beauty likes to be admired; that an actor likes to be applauded; that stout old Wellington himself was pleased, and smiled when the people cheered him as he passed? Suppose you had paid some respectful elegant compliment to that lady? Suppose you had asked that giant, if, for once, he would take anything at the liquor-bar? you might have learned a great deal of curious knowledge regarding giants and bearded ladies, about whom you evidently now know very little. There was that little boy of three years old, with a fine beard already, and his little legs and arms, as seen out of his little frock, covered with a dark down. What a queer little capering satyr! He was quite good-natured, childish, rather solemn. He had a little Norval dress, I remember: the drollest little Norval.

I have said the B. L. had another child. Now this was a little girl of some six years old, as fair and as smooth of skin, dear madam, as your own darling cherubs. She wandered about the great cabin quite melancholy. No one seemed to care for her. All the family affections were centred on Master Esau yonder. His little beard was beginning to be a little fortune already, whereas Miss Rosalba was of no good to the family. No one would pay

a cent to see *her* little fair face. No wonder the poor little maid was melancholy. As I looked at her, I seemed to walk more and more in a fairy tale, and more and more in a cavern of ogres. Was this a little fondling whom they had picked up in some forest, where lie the picked bones of the queen, her tender mother, and the tough old defunct monarch, her father? No. Doubtless they were quite good-natured people, these. I don't believe they were unkind to the little girl without the moustaches. It may have been only my fancy that she repined because she had a cheek no more bearded than a rose's.

Would you wish your own daughter, madam, to have a smooth cheek, a modest air, and a gentle feminine behaviour, or to be—I won't say a whiskered prodigy, like this Bearded Lady of Kentucky—but a masculine wonder, a virago, a female personage of more than female strength, courage, wisdom? Some authors, who shall be nameless, are, I know, accused of depicting the most feeble, brainless, namby-pamby heroines, for ever whimpering tears and prattling commonplaces. *You* would have the heroine of your novel so beautiful that she should charm the captain (or hero, whoever he may be) with her appearance; surprise and confound the bishop with her learning; outstride the squire and get

the brush, and, when he fell from his horse, whip out a lancet and bleed him; rescue from fever and death the poor cottager's family whom the doctor had given up; make 21 at the butts with the rifle, when the poor captain only scored 18; give him twenty in fifty at billiards and beat him; and draw tears from the professional Italian people by her exquisite performance (of voice and violoncello) in the evening;—I say, if a novelist would be popular with ladies—the great novel-readers of the world—this is the sort of heroine who would carry him through half-a-dozen editions. Suppose I had asked that Bearded Lady to sing? Confess, now, miss, you would not have been displeased if I had told you that she had a voice like Lablache, only ever so much lower.

My dear, you would like to be a heroine? You would like to travel in triumphal caravans; to see your effigy placarded on city walls; to have your levées attended by admiring crowds, all crying out, "Was there ever such a wonder of a woman?" You would like admiration? Consider the tax you pay for it. You would be alone were you eminent. Were you so distinguished from your neighbours—I will not say by a beard and whiskers, that were odious—but by a great and remarkable intellectual superiority—would you, do you think, be any the

happier? Consider envy. Consider solitude. Consider the jealousy and torture of mind which this Kentucky lady must feel, suppose she should hear that there is, let us say, a Missouri prodigy, with a beard larger than hers? Consider how she is separated from her kind by the possession of that wonder of a beard? When that beard grows grey, how lonely she will be, the poor old thing! If it falls off, the public admiration falls off too; and how she will miss it—the compliments of the trumpeters, the admiration of the crowd, the gilded progress of the car. I see an old woman alone in a decrepit old caravan, with cobwebs on the knocker, with a blistered ensign flapping idly over the door. Would you like to be that deserted person? Ah, Chloe! To be good, to be simple, to be modest, to be loved, be thy lot. Be thankful thou art not taller, nor stronger, nor richer, nor wiser than the rest of the world!

ON LETTS'S DIARY.

MINE is one of your No. 12 diaries, three shillings cloth boards; silk limp, gilt edges, three-and-six; French morocco, tuck ditto, four-and-six. It has two pages, ruled with faint lines for memoranda, for every week, and a ruled account at the end, for the twelve months from January to December, where you may set down your incomings and your expenses. I hope yours, my respected reader, are large; that there are many fine round sums of figures on each side of the page: liberal on the expenditure side, greater still on the receipt. I hope, sir, you will be "a better man," as they say, in '62 than in this moribund '61, whose career of life is just coming to its terminus. A better man in purse? in body? in soul's health? Amen, good sir, in all. Who is

there so good in mind, body or estate, but bettering won't still be good for him? O unknown Fate, presiding over next year, if you will give me better health, a better appetite, a better digestion, a better income, a better temper in '62 than you have bestowed in '61, I think your servant will be the better for the changes. For instance, I should be the better for a new coat. This one, I acknowledge, is very old. The family says so. My good friend, who amongst us would not be the better if he would give up some old habits? Yes, yes. You agree with me. You take the allegory? Alas! at our time of life we don't like to give up those old habits, do we? It is ill to change. There is the good old loose, easy, slovenly bedgown, laziness, for example. What man of sense likes to fling it off and put on a tight *guindé* prim dress-coat that pinches him? There is the cozy wraprascal, self-indulgence—how easy it is! How warm! How it always seems to fit! You can walk out in it; you can go down to dinner in it. You can say of such what Tully says of his books: *Pernoctat nobiscum, peregrinatur, rusticatur*. It is a little slatternly—it is a good deal stained—it isn't becoming—it smells of cigar-smoke; but, *allons donc!* let the world call me idle and sloven. I love my ease better than my neighbour's opinion. I live to please myself; not you, Mr.

Dandy, with your supercilious airs. I am a philosopher. Perhaps I live in my tub, and don't make any other use of it——. We won't pursue further this unsavoury metaphor; but, with regard to some of your old habits, let us say—

1. The habit of being censorious, and speaking ill of your neighbours.

2. The habit of getting into a passion with your man-servant, your maid-servant, your daughter, wife, &c.

3. The habit of indulging too much at table.

4. The habit of smoking in the dining-room after dinner.

5. The habit of spending insane sums of money in *bric-à-brac*, tall copies, binding, Elzevirs, &c.; '20 Port, outrageously fine horses, ostentatious entertainments, and what not? or,

6. The habit of screwing meanly, when rich, and chuckling over the saving of half-a-crown, whilst you are poisoning your friends and family with bad wine.

7. The habit of going to sleep immediately after dinner, instead of cheerfully entertaining Mrs. Jones and the family: or,

8. LADIES! The habit of running up bills with the milliners, and swindling paterfamilias on the house bills.

9. The habit of keeping him waiting for breakfast.

10. The habit of sneering at Mrs. Brown and the Miss Browns, because they are not quite *du monde*, or quite so genteel as Lady Smith.

11. The habit of keeping your wretched father up at balls till five o'clock in the morning, when he has to be at his office at eleven.

12. The habit of fighting with each other, dear Louisa, Jane, Arabella, Amelia.

13. The habit of *always* ordering John Coachman three-quarters of an hour before you want him.

Such habits, I say, sir or madam, if you have had to note in your diary of '61, I have not the slightest doubt you will enter in your pocket-book of '62. There are habits Nos. 4 and 7, for example. I am morally sure that some of us will not give up those bad customs, though the women cry out and grumble, and scold ever so justly. There are habits Nos. 9 and 13. I feel perfectly certain, my dear young ladies, that you will continue to keep John Coachman waiting; that you will continue to give the most satisfactory reasons for keeping him waiting: and as for (9), you will show that you once (on the 1st of April last, let us say,) came to breakfast first, and that you are *always* first in consequence.

Yes; in our '62 diaries, I fear we may all of us make some of the '61 entries. There is my friend Freehand, for instance. (Aha! Master Freehand, how you will laugh to find yourself here!) F. is in the habit of spending a little, ever so little, more than his income. He shows you how Mrs. Freehand works, and works (and indeed, Jack Freehand, if you say she is an angel, you don't say too much of her); how they toil, and how they mend, and patch, and pinch; and how they *can't* live on their means. And I very much fear—nay, I will bet him half a bottle of Gladstone 14s. per dozen claret—that the account which is a little on the wrong side this year, will be a little on the wrong side in the next ensuing year of grace.

A diary. Dies. Hodie. How queer to read are some of the entries in the journal! Here are the records of dinners eaten, and gone the way of flesh. The lights burn blue somehow, and we sit before the ghosts of victuals. Hark at the dead jokes resurging! Memory greets them with the ghost of a smile. Here are the lists of the individuals who have dined at your own humble table. The agonies endured before and during those entertainments are renewed, and smart again. What a failure that special grand dinner was! How those dreadful occasional waiters did break the old china! What a

dismal hash poor Mary, the cook, made of the French dish which she *would* try out of *Francatelli*! How angry Mrs. Pope was at not going down to dinner before Mrs. Bishop! How Trimalchio sneered at your absurd attempt to give a feast; and Harpagon cried out at your extravagance and ostentation! How Lady Almack bullied the other ladies in the drawing-room (when no gentlemen were present): never asked you back to dinner again: left her card by her footman: and took not the slightest notice of your wife and daughters at Lady Hustleby's assembly! On the other hand, how easy, cozy, merry, comfortable, those little dinners were; got up at one or two days' notice; when everybody was contented; the soup as clear as amber; the wine as good as Trimalchio's own; and the people kept their carriages waiting, and would not go away till midnight!

Along with the catalogue of bygone pleasures, balls, banquets, and the like, which the pages record, comes a list of much more important occurrences, and remembrances of graver import. On two days of Dives' diary are printed notices that "Dividends are due at the Bank." Let us hope, dear sir, that this announcement considerably interests you; in which case, probably, you have no need of the almanack-maker's printed reminder. If you look over

poor Jack Reckless's note-book, amongst his memoranda of racing odds given and taken, perhaps you may read:—"Nabbam's bill, due 29th September, 142*l.* 15*s.* 6*d.*" Let us trust, as the day has passed, that the little transaction here noted has been satisfactorily terminated. If you are paterfamilias, and a worthy kind gentleman, no doubt you have marked down on your register, 17th December (say), "Boys come home." Ah, how carefully that blessed day is marked in *their* little calendars! In my time it used to be, Wednesday, 13th November, "*5 weeks from the holidays*;" Wednesday, 20th November, "*4 weeks from the holidays*;" until sluggish time sped on, and we came to WEDNESDAY 18TH DECEMBER. O rapture! Do you remember pea-shooters? I think we only had them on going home for holidays from private schools,—at public schools, men are too dignified. And then came that glorious announcement, Wednesday, 27th, "Papa took us to the Pantomime;" or if not papa, perhaps you condescended to go to the pit, under charge of the footman.

That was near the end of the year—and mamma gave you a new pocket-book, perhaps, with a little coin, God bless her, in the pocket. And that pocket-book was for next year, you know; and, in that pocket-book you had to write down that sad day, Wednesday, January 24th, eighteen hundred and

never mind what,—when Dr. Birch's young friends were expected to re-assemble.

Ah me! Every person who turns this page over has his own little diary, in paper or ruled in his memory tablets, and in which are set down the transactions of the now dying year. Boys and men, we have our calendar, mothers and maidens. For example, in your calendar pocket-book, my good Eliza, what a sad, sad day that is—how fondly and bitterly remembered—when your boy went off to his regiment, to India, to danger, to battle perhaps. What a day was that last day at home, when the tall brother sat yet amongst the family, the little ones round about him wondering at saddle-boxes, uniforms, sword-cases, gun-cases, and other wondrous apparatus of war and travel which poured in and filled the hall; the new dressing-case for the beard not yet grown; the great sword-case at which little brother Tom looks so admiringly! What a dinner that was, that last dinner, when little and grown children assembled together, and all tried to be cheerful! What a night was that last night, when the young ones were at roost for the last time together under the same roof, and the mother lay alone in her chamber counting the fatal hours as they tolled one after another, amidst her tears, her watching, her fond prayers. What a night that was,

and yet how quickly the melancholy dawn came! Only too soon the sun rose over the houses. And now in a moment more the city seemed to wake. The house began to stir. The family gathers together for the last meal. For the last time in the midst of them the widow kneels amongst her kneeling children, and falters a prayer in which she commits her dearest, her eldest born, to the care of the Father of all. O night, what tears you hide—what prayers you hear! And so the nights pass and the days succeed, until that one comes when tears and parting shall be no more.

In your diary, as in mine, there are days marked with sadness, not for this year only, but for all. On a certain day—and the sun, perhaps, shining ever so brightly—the house-mother comes down to her family with a sad face, which scares the children round about in the midst of their laughter and prattle. They may have forgotten—but she has not—a day which came, twenty years ago it may be, and which she remembers only too well: the long night-watch; the dreadful dawning and the rain beating at the pane; the infant speechless, but moaning in its little crib; and then the awful calm, the awful smile on the sweet cherub face, when the cries have ceased, and the little suffering breast heaves no more. Then the children, as they see

their mother's face, remember this was the day on which their little brother died. It was before they were born; but she remembers it. And as they pray together, it seems almost as if the spirit of the little lost one was hovering round the group. So they pass away: friends, kindred, the dearest-loved, grown people, aged, infants. As we go on the down-hill journey, the mile-stones are grave-stones, and on each more and more names are written; unless haply you live beyond man's common age, when friends have dropped off, and, tottering, and feeble, and unpitied, you reach the terminus alone.

In this past year's diary is there any precious day noted on which you have made a new friend? This is a piece of good fortune bestowed but grudgingly on the old. After a certain age a new friend is a wonder, like Sarah's child. Aged persons are seldom capable of bearing friendships. Do you remember how warmly you loved Jack and Tom when you were at school; what a passionate regard you had for Ned when you were at college, and the immense letters you wrote to each other? How often do you write, now that postage costs nothing? There is the age of blossoms and sweet budding green: the age of generous summer; the autumn when the leaves drop; and then winter, shivering and bare. Quick, children, and sit at my feet: for

they are cold, very cold: and it seems as if neither wine nor worsted will warm 'em.

In this past year's diary is there any dismal day noted in which you have lost a friend? In mine there is. I do not mean by death. Those who are gone, you have. Those who departed loving you, love you still; and you love them always. They are not really gone, those dear hearts and true; they are only gone into the next room: and you will presently get up and follow them, and yonder door will close upon *you*, and you will be no more seen. As I am in this cheerful mood, I will tell you a fine and touching story of a doctor which I heard lately. About two years since there was, in our or some other city, a famous doctor, into whose consulting-room crowds came daily, so that they might be healed. Now this doctor had a suspicion that there was something vitally wrong with himself, and he went to consult another famous physician at Dublin, or it may be at Edinburgh. And he of Edinburgh punched his comrade's sides; and listened at his heart and lungs; and felt his pulse, I suppose; and looked at his tongue; and when he had done, Doctor London said to Doctor Edinburgh, "Doctor, how long have I to live?" And Doctor Edinburgh said to Doctor London, "Doctor, you may last a year."

Then Doctor London came home, knowing that what Doctor Edinburgh said was true. And he made up his accounts, with man and heaven, I trust. And he visited his patients as usual. And he went about healing, and cheering, and soothing and doctoring; and thousands of sick people were benefited by him. And he said not a word to his family at home; but lived amongst them cheerful and tender, and calm, and loving; though he knew the night was at hand when he should see them and work no more.

And it was winter time, and they came and told him that some man at a distance—very sick, but very rich—wanted him; and, though Doctor London knew that he was himself at death's door, he went to the sick man; for he knew the large fee would be good for his children after him. And he died; and his family never knew until he was gone, that he had been long aware of the inevitable doom.

This is a cheerful carol for Christmas, is it not? You see, in regard to these Roundabout discourses, I never know whether they are to be merry or dismal. My hobby has the bit in his mouth; goes his own way; and sometimes trots through a park, and sometimes paces by a cemetery. Two days since came the printer's little emissary, with a note saying, "We are waiting for the Roundabout Paper!" A

Roundabout Paper about what or whom? How stale it has become, that printed jollity about Christmas! Carols, and wassail-bowls, and holly, and mistletoe, and yule-logs *de commande*—what heaps of these have we not had for years past! Well, year after year the season comes. Come frost, come thaw, come snow, come rain, year after year my neighbour the parson has to make his sermon. They are getting together the bonbons, iced cakes, Christmas trees at Fortnum and Mason's now. The geni of the theatres are composing the Christmas pantomime, which our young folks will see and note anon in their little diaries.

And now, brethren, may I conclude this discourse with an extract out of that great diary, the newspaper? I read it but yesterday, and it has mingled with all my thoughts since then. Here are the two paragraphs, which appeared following each other:—

“Mr. R., the Advocate-General of Calcutta, has been appointed to the post of Legislative Member of the Council of the Governor-General.”

“Sir R. S., Agent to the Governor-General for Central India, died on the 29th of October, of bronchitis.”

These two men, whose different fates are recorded in two paragraphs and half-a-dozen lines of the

same newspaper, were sisters' sons. In one of the stories by the present writer, a man is described tottering "up the steps of the ghaut," having just parted with his child, whom he is despatching to England from India. I wrote this, remembering in long, long distant days, such a ghaut, or river-stair, at Calcutta; and a day when, down those steps, to a boat which was in waiting, came two children, whose mothers remained on the shore. One of those ladies was never to see her boy more; and he, too, is just dead in India, "of bronchitis, on the 29th October." We were first-cousins; had been little playmates and friends from the time of our birth; and the first house in London to which I was taken, was that of our aunt, the mother of his Honour the Member of Council. His Honour was even then a gentleman of the long robe, being, in truth, a baby in arms. We Indian children were consigned to a school of which our deluded parents had heard a favourable report, but which was governed by a horrible little tyrant, who made our young lives so miserable that I remember kneeling by my little bed of a night, and saying, "Pray God, I may dream of my mother!" Thence we went to a public school; and my cousin to Addiscombe and to India.

"For thirty-two years," the paper says, "Sir

Richmond Shakespear faithfully and devotedly served the Government of India, and during that period but once visited England, for a few months and on public duty. In his military capacity he saw much service, was present in eight general engagements, and was badly wounded in the last. In 1840, when a young lieutenant, he had the rare good fortune to be the means of rescuing from almost hopeless slavery in Khiva 416 subjects of the Emperor of Russia; and, but two years later, greatly contributed to the happy recovery of our own prisoners from a similar fate in Cabul. Throughout his career this officer was ever ready and zealous for the public service, and freely risked life and liberty in the discharge of his duties. Lord Canning, to mark his high sense of Sir Richmond Shakespear's public services, had lately offered him the Chief Commissionership of Mysore, which he had accepted, and was about to undertake, when death terminated his career."

When he came to London the cousins and playfellows of early Indian days met once again, and shook hands. "Can I do anything for you?" I remember the kind fellow asking. He was always asking that question: of all kinsmen; of all widows and orphans; of all the poor; of young men who might need his purse or his service. I saw a young

officer yesterday to whom the first words Sir Richmond Shakespear wrote on his arrival in India were, "Can I do anything for you?" His purse was at the command of all. His kind hand was always open. It was a gracious fate which sent him to rescue widows and captives. Where could they have had a champion more chivalrous, a protector more loving and tender?

I write down his name in my little book, among those of others dearly loved, who, too, have been summoned hence. And so we meet and part; we struggle and succeed; or we fail and drop unknown on the way. As we leave the fond mother's knee, the rough trials of childhood and boyhood begin; and then manhood is upon us, and the battle of life, with its chances, perils, wounds, defeats, distinctions. And Fort William guns are saluting in one man's honour,* while the troops are firing the last volleys over the other's grave—over the grave of the brave, the gentle, the faithful Christian soldier.

* W. R. obiit March 22, 1862.

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* W. H. Ellis March 23, 1861.

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Thackeray, William Makepeace

Roundabout papers

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